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BY
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AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

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Lawrence Naaikuur received a Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Social Science with specialization in communication studies from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome in 2004. He had received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Science from the same University in 2003. In 1994, he received a Diploma in Communication Studies from the Ghana Institute of Journalism. In 2009, he joined the University for Development Studies as a lecturer in the Department of African and General Studies where he has taught an array of development communication related courses, including community radio.

He worked as a consultant for the Northern Ghana Offices of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Netherlands Development Organization (known as the SNV) between 2006 and 2008. In both organizations, his main tasks included the design of communication strategies to use as advocacy tools, including public education on nutrition. With the WFP, he also collaborated entrepreneurial training of women groups in the Northern and Upper West Regions.

He was the General Manager of the first community radio station in Ghana, Radio Progress, playing a lead role in the founding of the station. He held that position from 1997 to 2001when he preceded to Rome for studies. He was instrumental in the founding of the Ghana Community Radio Network, an umbrella organization of community radio stations in the country.

In June 2013, he enrolled as a PhD student in the Department of Culture and Global Studies, Aalborg University. In his PhD thesis, he sheds light on problems of communication in Ghana's local governance system and presents community radio as a suitable public communication system for addressing the challenges for the realization of more effective local governance.

ENGLISH SUMMARY

Ghana implemented a decentralization programme in 1987 in line with a world-wide movement to promote good governance by bringing governance closer to ordinary people. The laws on Ghana's decentralization explicitly state the main purpose of the programme as the promotion of citizen participation in decision making, accountability of the local government units (the District Assemblies) to the local communities and responsiveness to the development needs of the people.

However, there has been widespread dissatisfaction with the state of participation, accountability and responsiveness in the country's local governance. The central thesis of this study posits that the problems of participation, accountability and responsiveness are linked to the poor flow of communication between the people and their local government units; a situation that deprives the people of opportunities to make inputs into decisions, demand accountability and responsiveness from local government. The communication gap stems from an ineffective representation of community representatives at the local government councils (District Assembly Members) who are mandated to link local communities with the Assemblies through regular reports, and a low attention of the country's mainstream media public service and commercial media in championing the course of the country's effective decentralization programme.

The overarching focus of the study is the exploration of how community radio (CR) can address some issue-based areas related to efforts aimed at building good governance practices at the local level of Ghana. Two-pronged research questions have been formulated as an aid to answering the main question. Royals FM, a member station of the Ghana Community Radio Network (GRCN), the national umbrella organization of CR stations operating at Wenchi District Assembly area of Brong Ahafo Region, has been investigated in relation to its role in promoting good governance at the grassroots level. A qualitative approach, based on the interpretative research paradigm, has been adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique has been used for selecting participants, institutions and organizations. In all, 39 participants from respective organizations and communities have been involved in the study. Data for the study was collected from primary and secondary sources. Instruments for data collection are Focus Group Discussion and In-depth interviews.

Data analysis was guided by the core principles of CR: community ownership, not-for-profit, non-partisanship and the exclusive use of indigenous languages. These served as a framework for gauging stakeholders' perceptions on the role of CR in promoting quality governance at the local level, relative to the other broadcasting systems in the country. The normative media functions in governance; namely, the media acting as a civic-forum, a watchdog, and an agenda-setter, have guided the analysis on the impact of Royals FM in promoting participation of the local people in the decision making processes at the local District Assembly; in holding the local

government officials accountable to the people, and in making these duty-bearers responsive to the development needs of the people.

The explorative study clearly demonstrates that CR can be a unique medium for promoting good local governance provided its core characteristics of community ownership, non-profit, non-partisanship and exclusive use of local languages, are well adhered to. But the study reveals deficits in adherence to these principles as Royals FM and other GCRN members are not truly owned and there is a widespread perception that the stations are no less politically partisan than the mainstream public and commercial radio in Ghana. The less than authentic CR in Ghana tends to create a waning public confidence in the stations and seem to undermine their valuable contributions to local governance.

The above short falls notwithstanding, the study provides ample insight on how Royals FM has tackled issues related to participation, accountability and responsiveness in the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. There are innovative programmes that promote vigorous on-air debates on development issues and promote civic education on citizens' rights within the local governance system. The programmes serve to enhance communication between the Assembly members and their electorates by regularly featuring the Assembly members on air through which they are held accountable. In playing a watchdog through investigative journalism, Royals FM has revealed financial corruption at the Assembly. And in serving as an agenda-setter, the immediate developmental challenges of the people are not only highlighted, but pressures are also brought to bear on duty-bearers leading to the provision of services in health, education and sanitation across the District. However, the study finds no evidence of programmes strategically designed to focus on policy issues through which the people of the Wenchi community could influence the development planning and budgeting of the Assembly. In addition, Royals FM has been unable to hold the District Chief Executives of the Wenchi Assembly accountable to the people for the enormous powers they wield at the Assembly. Moreover, the impact of Royals FM's responsiveness programmes has been less felt in outlying village areas than in the Wenchi Township, due to financial and logistical constraints with extending its field-based reportage to those areas.

DANSK RESUME

Ghana implementerede et decentraliseringsprogram i 1987 på linje med en verdensomspændende bevægelse for, at promovere god regeringsførelse ved, at bringe regeringsførelse tættere på ordinære mennesker. Lovene om Ghanas decentralisering eksplicit erklærer det primære formål for programmet som promoveringen af borger deltagelse i beslutningstagning, ansvarlighed af den lokale regerings enheder (Distrikts Forsamlingen) til de lokale samfund og lydhørhed til folkets udviklingsbehov.

Dog, har der været udbredt utilfredshed med tilstanden af den lokale styres deltagelse, ansvarlighed og lydhørhed. Den centrale tese af denne undersøgelse forudsætter at problemerne med deltagelse, ansvarlighed og lydhørhed er forbundet med den dårlige strøm af kommunikation mellem folket og deres lokale regeringsenheder; en situation der fratager folket muligheder for at lave inputs i beslutninger, kræve ansvarlighed og lydhørhed fra lokal regering. Kommunikationshullet stammer fra en ineffektiv repræsentation af samfundsrepræsenter ved det lokale regeringsråd (Distrikts Forsamling Medlemmer) som er påkrævet at forbinde lokalsamfundene med Forsamlingerne gennem regulære rapporter, og en lav opmærksomhed til landets populære offentlige medieservice og kommercielle medier til at styre kursen for landets effektive decentraliseringsprogram.

Det altomfattende fokus i undersøgelsen er udforskningen af hvordan samfunds radio (CR) kan adressere nogle problembaserede områder relateret til forsøg sigtet på at bygge god regeringsførelses praksisser ved det lokale plan i Ghana. Tostrenget forskningsspørgsmål er blevet formuleret som en hjælp til at besvare det primære spørgsmål. Royals FM, en medlemsstation i Ghana Samfunds Radio Netværk (GRCN), den nationale paraplyorganisation CR stationer operer i Wenchi distrikt forsamlingsområdet Brong Ahafo Regionen, er blevet efterforsket i relation til dens rolle i at promovere god regeringsførelse på græsrodsplanen. En kvalitativ tilgang, baseret på det fortolkende forsknings paradigme, er blevet taget i brug i undersøgelsen. Målrettet stikprøveteknikker er blevet anvendt for at udvælge deltagere, institutioner og organisationer. I alt er 39 deltagere fra respektive organisationer og samfund blevet involveret i undersøgelsen. Data til undersøgelsen blev indsamlet fra primære og sekundære kilder. Værktøjerne for dataindsamlingen er fokusgruppe diskussioner og dybdegående interviews.

Data analysen var styret af kerneprincipperne for CR: fælles ejerskab, ikke-for-profit, ingen-partipolitik og det eksklusive brug af indfødte sprog. Disse tjente som rammesætning for at vurdere interessenternes opfattelser af CRs rolle i at promovere kvalitetsstyring på det lokale plan, relativt til de andre udsendelsessystemer i landet. Det normative medies funktioner i regeringsførelse; nemlig, mediet der agerer som et borgerligt forum, en vagthund, og en agendasætter, har dirigeret analysen om indflydelsen af Royals FM i forhold til promovering af deltagelse af det lokale folk i

beslutningtagelses processen ved det lokale distrikt forsamling; i at holde de lokale regerings officielle til ansvar for folket, og i at skabe disse pligtbærers lydhørhed til folkets udviklingsbehov.

Det eksplorative undersøgelse demonstrerer klart, at CR kan være et unikt medium til at promovere god lokal regeringsførelse, forudsat dens kerne karakteristika af fælles ejerskab, ikke-profit, ingen-partipolitik og eksklusivt brug af lokale sprog, er veloverholdt. Men undersøgelsen afslører mangler i overholdelsen af disse principper da Royals FM og andre GCRN medlemmer ikke er faktisk ejet der er en udbredt opfattelse af at stationerne ikke er mindre politiske tilhængere end det populære offentlige og kommercielle radio i Ghana. Det mindre end autentiske CR i Ghana tenderer til at skabe en aftagende offentligt tiltro til stationer lader til at underminere deres værdifulde bidrag til lokal regeringsførelse.

Det ovennævnte kommer til kort til trods for, at undersøgelsen forsyner rigelig indsigt i hvordan Royals FM har håndteret problemerne relateret til deltagelse, ansvarlighed og lydhørhed i Wenchi Kommunal Forsamlingen. Der er innovative programmer der promoverer energisk on-air debatter på udviklingsproblemer og promoverer borgerlig uddannelse af borgerrettigheder indenfor det lokale statssystem. Programmerne tjener til at forbedre kommunikation mellem Forsamlingsmedlemmer og deres vælgere ved at regulært inddrage Forsamlingsmedlemmer on-air hvorved de er holdt ansvarlige. Ved at lege vagthund igennem efterforskende journalistik, har Royals FM afsløret finansiel korruption i Forsamlingen. Og i tjenesten som agendasætter, er folkets omgående udfordringer ikke kun fremhævet, men de er også lagt pres på pligtansvarlige, som har ledet til bestemmelsen af tjenester indenfor sundhed, uddannelse og sanitet i distriktet. Dog har undersøgelsen ikke fundet nogen beviser for at programmet er strategisk designet til at fokusere på politiske problemer hvorigennem folket i Wenchi samfundet kan influere udviklingsplanlægningen og budgettering af Forsamlingen. Desuden har Royals FM ikke været i stand til at holde de administrerende distrikts direktører for Wenchi Forsamlingen til ansvar over for folket for den enorme magt de har ved Forsamlingen. Endvidere er indflydelsen af Royals FMs lydhørhedsprogrammer blevet følt mindre i de ydre landsbyer end i Wenchi byerne, på grund af finansielle og logistiske begrænsninger med udvidelsen af dens felt baserede reportage til disse områder.

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On the journey with my PhD, I met many personal challenges. The greatest one was the illness of my daughter who was diagnosed with cancer in January 2015, just after her one-year birthday. This was a big blow to me because the child's illness required long-term treatment demanding time and attention. The situation posed a setback to the progress of the PhD project, contributing significantly to the delay in completion. But I must express gratitude to the Aalborg University for showing special compassion for my plight and encouraging me to continue to work on the thesis for submission at a later date after the expiry of the official time. I acknowledge the special sympathy expressed to me by Inger Larsen and Paul Bruce McIlvenny, both past directors of the Centre for Discourses in Transition (C-DiT) and the Interdisciplinary Discourse Studies doctoral programme when I officially informed the University.

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CHAPETR 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, the most dominant concept in the development discourse and politics in many developing countries, including Africa with the return to democratization since the 1990s, can be summed up with the catchphrase "good governance" (UNDP, 1997; Gisselquist, 2012). The central thesis of the discourse is that "getting politics right" is a precondition and a requisite of development (Eberlei, 2011). The argument goes that, in the new dispensation, not only human rights but also the socio-economic conditions of the lives of the people have seen significant improvement. It further holds that one main challenge of democratization has been how to ensure good governance. For proponents of the concept of good governance, for development programmes to impact positively the lives of people, principles of citizens' participation in decision-making processes, accountability of public officials to the public on development policies, and the ability of government to respond to citizens needs effectively and timely, must be upheld (UNDP, 1997; World Bank, 2007).

Virtually all current communication scholarship posit that effective communication is a key condition in spurring efforts aimed at promoting governance in the context of human development (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Wilson, 2007). A central theme running across the above cited literature is that communication serves as the main matrix for the government-citizen engagements on governance and development. It serves as a catalyst in facilitating information flow between people and decision-makers, in promoting dialogue, and facilitating horizontal debates among active citizens. For Srampical (2006), communication creates an environment within which people, especially the marginalized, can express themselves freely about development and becomes a facilitator of the people's participation in the definition of development problems and strategies for solutions.

It is important to call attention to the fact that the central position of communication in the governance for development discourse is a product of a paradigm shift in the discourse on development communication. As Chapter Four of this study shows, governance and development pursued by colonial powers and post-independent leaders of the nation states of Asia, Latin America and Africa were characterised by centralization (Crook & Manor, 1997; Oluwu & Wusch, 2004; Oxhorn et al., 2004). Following the modernization paradigm, virtually all decision-making on development was exclusively controlled by the few colonial government functionaries. This trend was continued by the governing elites of the post-independent nations who, like the colonial masters, were largely unaccountable to the populations (Waisbord, 2001; White, 2008). Communication was viewed as vital, but it assumed top-down information dissemination approaches geared towards persuading people to accept development interventions passively (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). In many African countries, the ruling governments implementing the modernization paradigm of development viewed the state-owned media (radio,

television and newspapers) as the agents of diffusion of modern culture and suggested the degree of modernization of society (Everett, 1962; 1983; Waisbord, 2001).

From the 1990s, many developing countries began to embrace decentralization as an important aspect of good governance. Generally, the decentralization reforms undertaken have aimed to transfer authority, resources and accountability from central governments to local government units. Communities are to assume central roles in managing their affairs with their rights to participate in policy decisions demand accountable and responsive governance, which would improve their lives and be legally guaranteed (Crook & Manor, 1997; Oluwu & Wusch, 2004; Oxhorn, Tulchin, & Selee, 2004). The works of local governance experts such as Oluwu and Wunsch (2004), Rao and Mansuri (2012) and leading governance and communication scholars, especially Servaes (2009) suggest that enhancing communication between government and local communities has been a considerable major driving force behind decentralization. The central belief by the decentralists is that decentralization reforms would present viable potentials for bringing proximity between citizens and authorities at the local level to enhance communication flow. Local people can communicate their needs and preferences to local government authorities for responsiveness. In turn, they can have better access to information on local governance for monitoring the activities and conduct of local government officials for accountability. For Servaes (2009), such effective communication between citizens and local authorities is crucial in catalysing citizens' participation in the development process including the enhancement of the ability of civic groups to influence the delivery of services to local citizens as well as the management of the most pressing questions of local development.

The above notwithstanding, there seems to have been an embedded communication problem in the decentralized governance systems of many of the developing countries. White (2008), for instance, in his reviews of major works on multi-country studies of decentralization across Sub-Saharan Africa, comes to a conclusion that a major problem of Africa's decentralization is precisely one of communication. He argues that although most African countries are making efforts to de-centralize government decision making so that government will be more responsive to local needs, this usually has not improved service delivery because of a disconnect in communication between district or ward councils and local communities. He observes a general absence of effective platforms or systems for citizens-local authorities' engagement on development issues and for promoting and facilitating dialogue that, on the one hand, would strengthen the articulation of community voices and on the other hand enhance transparency, accountability and responsiveness of government policies and initiatives.

This study addresses two factors which have traditionally affected the well-functioning of communication: ineffective decentralization reforms and a weakness in mainstreaming communication in local governance to address the weaknesses. A large number of developing countries have embarked on decentralization reforms that have tended to recentralize governance. These approaches to decentralization

have created gaps between policies and the practical situations on the ground. A major consequence of the state of affairs has been the emergence of weak local governance systems that provide little ability on the part of citizens to influence policies, hold authorities accountable and demand improved services (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999; Ayee, Oluwu & Wunsch, 2004; Ayee, 2008).

Some of the literature cited above suggests that the gaps between policies and realities on the ground could have been bridged through conscious strategies to mainstream communication into decentralization programmes in developing countries. A number of examples point to enormous possibilities in the creative application of diverse communication approaches and methodologies aimed to improve in local governance in Asia, Latin America and Africa (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). For White (2008) there are relatively better functioning local governments in countries such as Mexico, India, Zimbabwe and Botswana, which have better communication systems to promote vigorous public discussions about community improvement and the citizens are continually pushing the local officials to improve the facilities of education or health and solve various local problems. Likewise, the local media are continually speaking about community problems and raising the awareness of the people regarding local problems that should be dealt with.

The mass media of communication (the newspaper, radio and television) have long been recognised as key mechanisms and institutions for promoting good governance in the context of development in both the developed and developing countries has long been established by scholars and international organizations (Hudock, 2003; Ali, 2006; Servaes, 2009; Norris, 2010). Pippa Norris has been credited with providing a conceptual framework for definite definitions of the role of the media in governance. It is widely held that when, as a former director of the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP's) Democratic Governance Group, Norris summed up the role of the media as: a watchdog over the powerful, promoting accountability, transparency, and public scrutiny; as a civic forum for political debate, facilitating electoral choices and actions; and as an agenda-setter for policy makers, strengthening government responsiveness to social problems (Norris, 2006; 2010).

Looking at the context of developing countries, the media can play an even greater role in the development of local governance than in national level ones. A central argument by scholars goes that because the local is much smaller and more specific, independent local media can more easily mobilize local communities for pushing for good governance agenda than national media and international can do (Buckley et al., 2009; Serlomey, 2012; Julius-Adeoye, 2013). These sources agree that a robust and independent media sector can take up a central and unique role in providing citizens with the information they need to participate effectively in consultative processes and are crucial in stimulating social demands by local actors as well as empowering people to demand for better services from the local authorities and public institutions.

However, some studies, even though mainly anecdotal, have raised concerns about what they term a weak role of the media in promoting effective local governance in many of the countries. For instance, Santi (2012) draws on a World Bank report on the effectiveness of decentralization of health and education sectors in Uganda and Philippines to highlight the negative impact of the phenomenon. He calls attention to the fact that limited information on local politics and events has proven to be one of the largest constraints for the effectiveness of these reforms because citizens in both countries were found to be less informed about local government than national government. Although they relied on the media for information about national politics and corruption, they relied more on community leaders, local officials and personal contacts, a situation that resulted in the distortion of information on local government issues. White (2008) underscores the inadequate attention given to local governance issues by the media by noting that:

> While the national media operating in the national metropolitan cities in Africa are making central governance more accountable through investigative reporting and continuous reporting on the efficiency of government response to problems, this kind of media pressure generally does not exist at the district and regional level (2008:269-299).

An understanding of the problem of the media's involvement in local governance can be enhanced within a broader context of factors that influence the media's governance functions. A central argument among media and governance analysts holds that for the media to contribute effectively to governance outcomes there must prevail a number of cardinal conditions. These include legal or constitutional guarantees of freedoms of expression and media independence from political and economic interests, influences and controls (Norris, 2006; Odugbemi & Norris, 2010; McQuail, 2012).

However, according to leading media and democracy analysts, including Hyden et al. (2002) and Nyamnjoh (2009), even though many countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa have established favourable conditions that promote press freedom and plural media systems by the 20th Century, these conditions have often rather produced monopoly whereby the media are largely owned and controlled by the economically and politically powerful in society. The authors observe that in many of the contexts, the public service media systems particularly radio and television are supposed to be independent of government in order to serve the public interests, but they are often susceptible to governmental controls. The private commercial ones pursue the economic and political interests of their owners. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for example, the Department for International Development (DFID) in a report titled, *Media and Governance* (2008) found that most income for the 'independent' press was derived from payments from politicians, political parties and other public and private bodies for positive coverage of their activities. As discussed in various places in this study, Ghana's media scene is very much similar to that described above. A large part of the private media,

particularly radio is controlled by politicians who rely on them to champion their partisan agenda. The public service broadcaster, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) remains under the government's control in spite of it being insulated by the Constitution from such controls. Clearly the ability of these mainstream media to serve society in a politically and commercially disinterested posture is often compromised.

In this context, I consider it important to focus on Community radio (CR), often described as an alternative to mainstream broadcasting systems. This communication system, perhaps, best lends itself as the linchpin for good governance and development for grassroots, marginalized and poor societies across the globe presents. It is presented as a public communication system that is free from vested political and commercial interests to enable them effectively champion local governance for development agenda (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Carpenter et al., 2009; Jallov, 2012). Perhaps, the greatest strength of CR in this regard does not only rest in the pro-poor, development-oriented, participatory philosophy and its prioritization of the voices and concerns of grassroots communities, but it is also because CR is typically organized in ways to serve as channels for effective two-way information flow. It thus becomes an ideal tool for facilitating communication processes for citizens to influence pro-poor policies, highlighting flawed development initiatives (Buckley et al., 2008). In addition, as the World Bank (2012) posits, CR can become a critical enabler of information, and be able to check the misuse of power, incompetence and official corruption. For its numerous advantages, there is an increasing recognition of the medium as an important tool for promoting democracy and decentralization in many developing countries, being sought after to play crucial roles in communicating information between authorities and the population, politicians and voters, and among citizens (AMARC, 2007; World Bank, 2012).

The governance role of CR can further be appreciated in the context of the many advantages of radio against the other forms of the traditional communication media. Radio has been presented as an ideal tool for promoting good governance, particularly in the developing countries due mainly to the medium's ability to favour dialogue between governments and citizens as well as facilitate interactions among citizens on governance and development issues (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Buckley et al., 2008). Radio has two other key strengths in its governance role: first, because of its ability to shift from its top-down flow of information dissemination about development problems and to persuade people to adopt new ideas and behaviours, as it was in the early days, to being a participatory medium. This is especially the case with how the complementary role of cell phones has helped enhance radio as an increasingly participatory medium (Fleming, 2002; Jallov, 2012; Rodriguez & Miralles, 2014). Added to this, its relative cost-efficiency, even with its ability to reach illiterate populations and those who are geographically remote, and the adaptability of its content to local cultures and broadcast in local languages, are worth emphasising (Bosch, 2014; Buckley et al., 2008).

Across Africa, radio has retained an enormous influence over social, cultural, and political life in nearly all parts of the world, even in the wake of the new media explosion (Mckay, 2009). Available literature finds that people listen to radio mostly in the morning before work, so they are aware of issues and debates for the day, and in the evening to get a summary of the day's news (Ufuoma, 2012). In practice for Ghana, radio has become a common medium for communication for both the educated and uneducated people. This accounts for a tremendous increase in the number of people with radio sets in the country, despite the emergence of new media (Ufuoma, 2012).

I have, nonetheless, identified a dual (theoretical and empirical) gap in the field of communication and governance which this dissertation attempts to solve. The contribution of communication, anchored at the community level, to improve governance and to support the processes of decentralisation has been overlooked and is barely theorised. At the empirical level, there is no evidence of a systematic study on the role of CR in local governance, except the anecdotal ones indicated earlier. Available literature shows that an enormous amount of study has been conducted on decentralization and local government in Ghana and across Africa, but very little academic literature exists on the communication perspective. Particularly, there is a dearth of literature on the media's role in local governance, particularly on CR. The objective of my study, therefore, is to analyze the role of CR in improving quality governance at the local level of Ghana. I will do that through the case study of Royals FM, a member station of the Ghana Community Radio Network (GRCN) the national umbrella organization of CR stations operating at Wenchi District Assembly area of Brong-Ahafo Region, has been investigated in that regard.

1.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central question of this study is:

How can CR address some issue-based areas related to efforts aimed at building good governance practices at the local level of Ghana? Special focus is on an exploration of how this broadcasting system positions itself as a more effective medium than the other media within the pluralism media landscape the country for mobilizing local communities to improve citizens' participation in development policy planning and implementation, to hold the local government authorities accountable to the local communities in the wide range of decision making, and in making these duty-bears more responsive to the development needs of the people. This study is not oblivious to other indicators of the good governance concept, but as explained in the next section of the chapter, the indicators of participation, accountability and responsiveness, have been singled out because they are most eloquently articulated in the design of Ghana's local governance system as the contours of good local governance in the country.

To help find answers to the main question, I present the following specific sub-questions:

(1) How do community members, local government officials and other stakeholders in the district perceive the role of CR in Ghana's local governance relative to the other radio types in the country?
(2) How is Royals FM tackling pertinent issues of local governance in the Wenchi Municipal District?

The above questions provide direction to the theoretical, methodological, and analytical frameworks and data requirements for this thesis. The next section provides the background to the study; particular attention is on the media landscape in Ghana and Ghana's decentralization programme. The presentation there sets a good stage for the explication of the problem underpinning the study.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE CASE STUDY

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana established conditions that have spurred reforms in the media and political spheres of the country. On the media front, a long chequered history of military dictatorships interspersed with brief democratic experiments, impeded press freedom in Ghana's the post-independent era. Precisely from about 1960, attempts at independent press activity had been very short-lived, emerging and falling with each short-lived democratic experiments (Gadzekpo, 2008). According to Gadzekpo (2008), for about half or more than half of the entire period of independence, until 1992, Ghana had not had an uninterrupted period of a pluralistic press to provide alternative and diverse sources of information and channels of expressing differing, much less dissenting views. Prior to 1992, the culture of silence was dominant - the mass media, broadcast and print, were dominated by the State. Broadcasting controlled through the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), operated as a state monopoly (Buckley, Apenteng, Bathily & Mtimde, 2005).

However, over the last twenty years, Ghana's cultural heritage has begun to find new forms of expression in the media through the growth of private commercial and community broadcasting. Statistics from the broadcasting regulator, the National Communications Authority (NCA) shows that, as at the second quarter of 2018, the authorized radio stations totalled 505 with 392 active in operation. They mainly comprise the publicly owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), private-commercial stations and community-based ones.

What has given impetus to the development of Ghana's media landscape is a robust constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech. Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution is dedicated to the media. Article 21(1)(a) states that "There shall be freedom of speech and expression, which shall freedom of the press and other media". The Constitution sets out a substantive framework for the freedom and independence of the media with important protections against state interference. Article 126 stresses

the need for "no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular there shall be no law requiring any one to obtain a licence as a prerequisite or the operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information" (Article 126(3).

The Constitution also established two important institutions, the NCA and the National Media Commission (NMC), with respective functions to regulate broadcasting development, and to protect media freedom.

Ghana has a high press freedom profile. In 2018, the country occupied the 23rd position in world press freedom ranking and is being touted as one of the countries with the freest media system in Africa (Freedom House, 2018). The media has contributed greatly to Ghana gaining the acolyte, beacon of democracy and good governance in Africa, as the country has held seven successful elections since the return to multi-party democracy in 1992. Obviously, the vibrant media landscape underpinned by such public, private and community ownership of radio stations, has established a uniquely favourable environment for the media to contribute to good governance at all levels in the country.

Of special importance to this study is the fact that the Constitution assigns a special role to the media to promote good governance in the country by recognizing the media as the Fourth Estate vested with powers to hold government to account. Article 162(5) states "All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana".

CR is a significant sector of Ghana's media system. Eighty one (81) out of the number of radio stations indicated earlier are operating as community stations. The stations are dotted in various communities across the regions of the country. They are located in mainly rural and semi-rural areas with the marginalized and least voiced as their purported primary target listeners and participants in their operations (Diedong & Naaikuur, 2012). However, only 26 of the community stations are members of the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN), a national body of CR in the country that was formed in 1999 by Pioneer stations set up between 1997 and 1999 after the liberalization of the airwaves in 1995 (Buckley, Apenteng, Bathily & Mtimde, 2005). The Networks Constitution of 2004 states its basic aim to be the enhancement and building of the capacity of CR in the country to enable marginalized communities and groups to generate and share their knowledge and experience, to participate in discourse and decision-making at every level, to develop the richness of their culture, and to strengthen their communities as part of the national and global family.

Membership to the National association is determined by a station's willingness to subscribe to the Codes of the GCRN (Diedong & Naaikuur, 2012). Specific criteria requires that a station:

i. serves a specific, marginalized community;
ii. supports the self-development of its community and affirms and strengthens its culture;
iii. undertakes programme production and other aspects of its operations with the full participation of its community;
iv. is committed to, and actively works towards, the development of a democratic, community driven governance structure for its operation and management; and
v. is independent of all partisan or sectarian interests, or official affiliations to the state or any religion or political party and their agents, in both declaration and practice.

Studies on the GCRN stations have shown that they are impacting the lives of their communities (Alumuku, 2007; Mckay, 2009; Diedong & Naaikuur, 2012; Naaikuur & Diedong, 2014). Community members now initiate and design programmes that will be beneficial to them and are willing to be involved in debates either as panellists or through phone-ins, thereby improving the democratic process. Through their programming, CR stations have addressed crucial societal issues at community level such as poverty and social exclusion, empowerment of marginalized rural groups and catalysing development efforts of the under-privileged (Ufuoma, 2012).

Paradoxically, however, the legislative reforms on the media neglected giving attention to two important ingredients that are crucial for the development of the broadcasting sector and for facilitating the effective role of the media's role in democratic good governance. There is an absence a broadcasting law (BL) and a right to information law (RTIL). On the latter situation, since the dawn of independent broadcasting in the country, there has been a rather unclear policy context for broadcasting. In other words, there has been no explicit legislative and regulatory framework for the development of broadcasting in the country (Buckley et al., 2005; Broadcasting Bill, 2014). Similarly, although the Constitution provides for the public rights to information, government after government, have been lackadaisical towards making the RTIL, the obvious reason being the fear of public scrutiny. The ramifications of these legal voids have been taken up in a greater depth in the data analysis chapters of the study to show how they are constraining the ability of CR and the media in general in contributing effectively to good governance in the country.

Ghana's democratization that gave rise to the flourishing of the media discussed above, spurred efforts to decentralize the country's governance. An extended overview of the country's local governance reforms has been presented in a subsequent chapter, but it is deemed essential to capture here the following important elements of the current decentralization programme. Starting in 1988, and consolidating in 1993 with the 1992 Constitution, Ghana's decentralization provides a viable institutional framework that can shape the contours for the promotion of effective or good local governance in the country for the accelerated development of the country. This is evidenced in the relevant provisions in the 1992 Constitution and other documents cited below, which articulate the main purpose of Ghana's

decentralization programme as the involvement of grass-roots people in the affairs of governance with the mandated decentralized structures being the focal points of development of local communities.

Section 10(3)(a) of Act 462 of the Constitution charges the local government units, the District Assemblies (DAs) to be the focal points of development to ensure the overall development of the districts. The DAs are looked upon as major actors with responsibility for the development and management of the affairs of their respective communities. The Draft Decentralization Policy Framework (DDPF) and the National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAL) both of 2010, mandate the DAs to provide timely, effective and efficient delivery of services in the areas of basic education, primary health care, environmental hygiene, municipal transport, waste management, market management, lorry part administration and settlement planning. To operationalize the developmental mandate of the DAs, legislative instrument (LI) of 2009 has decentralized all national level departments that are responsible for the delivery of these services to operate as departments of the DAs. Article 252 (2) of the Constitution established the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) to provide the resource base for the operations of the DAs.

Legal provisions have been put in place to create genuine spaces for participation and mechanisms for accountability. Chapter 20, Article (2) of the Constitution defines the role of ordinary people, civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as follows: "... people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance". Specific areas of participation are planning and budgeting as well as the elections of the Assembly persons. The National Development Planning (System), Act 480 of 1994, section 3, provides for decentralized participatory planning and budgeting. This is to see to the active involvement of local communities and civil society organizations (CSOs) and other interest groups making inputs into the draft district development planning and budgeting framework (Ahwoi, 2008; MLGRD, 2010). The Assemblies are required to develop district plans based on development priorities generated from the communities.

Accountability is provided for in the legislative instrument that created the local government units, the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs). Of particular importance to this study is Article 16(1)(a), which stipulates for members of elected community representatives to the MMDAs, known as the Assembly members to account to their people on the work of the Assemblies. "A member of the MMDA shall ... maintain close contact with his electoral area, consults his people on issues to be discussed in the DA and collate their views, opinions and proposals". The assembly member is further expected to present the views of the people to the DA; attend sub-committee meetings of the DA; and meet the electorate before any scheduled meeting of the DA. The requirement for the assembly member to organize regular meetings, hold consultation with the electorate and collate joint opinions promotes responsiveness and makes decentralization responsive.

Therefore, it can be said that Ghana's local governance is geared towards greater participation by citizens in decision-making, accountability to local communities and responsiveness to the development needs of citizens.

In spite of the elaborate Constitutional provisions, the reality on the ground points to an attempt at recentralization of governance rather than decentralization. Analysts of the country's local governance system have described it as one designed in a top-down approach to facilitate centre-level control of key decision making and a recapturing of resources (Ayee, 2004; Ofei-Abogye, 2008; Ahwoi, 2010). In effect, as Arthur (2010) observes, Ghana's local government system is characterized by "political control than political commitment", which is more an attempt at recentralization than real decentralization of governance. This phenomenon is elaborated in Chapter Six to show that the key features of this centre-level control is a local government, whose decision making powers, remain limited. As White (2008) observes, while local communities can elect representatives to the DAs, funding and effective permissions are given exclusively to the DCEs from the central government. In addition development planning and budgeting are controlled by national government through respective ministries. Thus the system is fraud with structural and political constraints that tend to render the Constitutional and legal provisions on the autonomy of the MMDAs largely rhetorical.

Consequently, there is a widespread dissatisfaction with the state of civil society involvement in decision making at the DAs and accountability of the Assemblies to the communities as well as limited responsiveness of DAs to the development needs of the citizens (Ayee, 2010; MLGRD, 2010; Akrugu, Fielmua & Akugri, 2012; Asante, 2013; Mumin, 2014). Several studies have called attention to the weakness in community participation in local governance in Ghana as a significant factor limiting the effective operations of the country's local government system (Ayee, 2010; MLGRD, 2010; Akudugu et al., 2012; Asante, 2013; MFWA, 2014). In their study of a decentralized system as a framework for promoting participatory and bottom-up democracy and the citizenry-local officials' accountability relations in Bawku District of the Upper East Region by Akudugu et al. (2012), most people complained they did not participate in decision-making in their communities. The study found about 84 per cent of respondents saying they had never participated in making decisions regarding the kinds of development projects that were needed in their respective communities. The respondents claimed that their Assembly Members and were not effective in representing them at the decision making level. In the study catchment area, many citizens said they had very limited access to information about the activities of their DAs with respect to development plans and budgets as well as other vital documents.

Concerns about lack of participation are highlighted in multi-district study by Sustainable Enterprise Development of Ghana (SEND-Ghana). The study shows citizens' dissatisfaction with their level of participation in decisions regarding the use of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) in 48 MMDAs in the Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Greater Accra Regions. According to the study

findings, about 80% of the respondents reported that they had not been involved in such decisions, culminating in their poor knowledge of approved projects, budget information and public hearings among other barriers.

The overall effect of the state of affairs is a weak local government with the cumulative result that over two decades of decentralization, there is an enduring story of marginalization among rural populations who still suffer from inadequate basic amenities like water, electricity, roads, quality education and health care.

1.3. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

The central premise of the problem under investigation is that the weaknesses of community participation and accountability in Ghana's local governance are linked to poor flow of communication and the lack of a genuine voice for the least voiced (White, 2008; MFWA, 2014). The argument has been advanced in respect of two main dimensions of the problem, namely: 1) ineffective functioning of the community representatives (the Assembly members); and 2) ineffectiveness of the media in championing local governance issues.

The previous section of this chapter indicated the core mandates of the elected Assembly members to include their maintaining close contact with their electoral area, consulting their people on issues to be discussed in the DAs, and collating their views, opinions, and proposals presented them same to the DAs and reporting to their electorates the general decisions of the DAs. Thus the Assembly Members' role is essentially a communicative one, to facilitate internal community communication, and to link the electorate to the DAs. Kokor (2001:54) puts it:

> ...the Assembly Members are to perform the role of 'communicators' … the assembly member gives and receives information, ideas, and feelings correctly with understanding. It is a role that develops between the assembly member, citizens and the assembly itself.

If these provisions were followed to the letter by the assembly members, there would no doubt have been free flow of information between local people and the DAs, thereby engendering effective participation and accountability through effective communication. However, these requirements are not being met by most Assembly members. The main reason, according to analysts including Ayee (2004), is lack of logistics. Consequently, there is very little community level discussions as most Assembly members go to the Assemblies without knowing the real needs and wants of the people. The lack of communication leaves rural communities often being unaware of resources that are being channelled to the DAs for alleviating their poverty. As White (2008) observes, only those who have close political connections with the Assembly members or the Assembly have information about resources and are in the position to benefit from them. Since the use of resources to improve health or educational facilities usually requires a certain level of community

mobilization, the lack of good communication makes it possible for local officials to use resources available badly.

It is no wonder that when the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), a media centred CSO conducted a study in 2014 in selected districts across the country to find out how the local governance structures functioned as communication facilitators for promoting authorities - citizens engagements, citizens complained that their Assembly persons did not properly and regularly pass on information about the assemblies to them. From this, it can be concluded that the reliance on representatives to serve as channels for two-way communication between the DAs and the local communities is untenable.

On the role of the media, the main argument here is that the media has the potential to promote good governance at the local level through their normative functions as a civic-forum, a watchdog and an agenda-setter discussed earlier. Serving as a civic-forum, independent local media can be effective community mobilizers and empowerment for debates on development and governance issues. This can go to influence the formulation and implementation processes of key policies of the DAs. Playing as a watchdog, such media can hold the local government officials accountable to the local communities as well as check corruption at the MMDAs (a canker discussed in Chapter Six). And serving as an agenda-setter, they can highlight the most pressing development problems in local communities and ensure that resources approved by central government are used judiciously to solve them.

However, reports on several studies have shown that the role the media is playing in fostering a participatory and an accountable local government system is weak. Notable among the studies are those conducted by MFWA (2013; 2014; 2015), which had an overall objective to find out how the Ghanaian media, particularly radio could serve as effective instruments for contributing to the promotion of good local governance in the country. The 2013 study focused on *radio coverage of local governance issues* and was conducted in 23 districts in nine regions and involved 23 radio stations. The stations were mostly public service and commercial stations with only a CR station involved in the study. A key finding was the affirmation of the recognition of radio as effective platforms for information sharing, civic education and engagement as well as being pivotal in promoting citizen participation in local governance processes. As well, the studies accentuated that when the media are effective and professional, they can set the agenda for fostering some of the key conditions for successful democratic governance.

However, the findings showed that reportage, advocacy and programming on local governance issues were very low both in quantity and quality. The majority of studied stations (nearly 80%) did not have specific programmes that focused on local governance issues and when they did, such programmes were allocated less time compared to other programmes. There was evidence of a few of the local governance programmes and issues that were broadcast on air being of relatively low quality, highly uncritical and thus having less influence on governance

processes. In addition, opportunities for public participation in local development discussions and debates on radio stations continue to be limited. The major factors, among others that were responsible for the poor coverage of local governance issues by local radio stations were: weak capacity and limited understanding of local governance issues among journalists; limited programme production skills among journalists with local radio stations, logistical financial constraints and reluctance on the part of Assembly officials to disclose relevant information to the media.

The 2014 study conducted by Mumin titled *An Assessment of the Current Level of Citizen-Local Authorities Engagement on Revenue Inflow and Expenditure in Selected districts in Northern Ghana*, had the specific objective of assessing the current level of citizens-authorities engagement on revenue inflow and expenditure in five selected districts in the three Northern regions of Ghana. It involved two public service, two commercial and one CR station/s, which notably was the same CR involved in the first study. The study showed that even though radio was perceived to be the most prevalent and effective platform of engagement between assembly authorities and community members, compared to other available channels and held the potential to promote transparent and accountable local governance, radio programming was described as ineffective due to a lacking in focus on local governance issues, of short duration and the attitude of assemblies towards engaging citizens was poor. In addition, none of the studied assemblies had a blueprint media engagement plan even though they all indicated that the media was helpful and that they engaged the media.

The third study of 2015, *Using Radio to promote Effective, Participatory and Accountable Local Governance* has produced a Policy Brief that summaries experiences of social accountability practices undertaken by MFWA that were informed by the earlier studies. The project used 30 different radio across the country "to produce and broadcast quality programmes that focus on development/governance issues at the local level and enhance opportunities for citizens 'participation in the local governance processes and debates". The brief noted positive outcomes of the intervention to include increasing knowledge of journalists in local governance issues, increasing and institutional radio programming on local governance and community development issues and improving services in communities. However, two notable challenges of significant importance identified by the study were perceived partisan posture of some of the radio stations as well as bureaucratic nature of the local assembly's information disclosure. In specific cases, some of the radio stations were found to be playing "lap-dog" roles instead of being watch-dogs by being like public relations outlets for the DAs whilst others were being overly sensational in their reportage because of their perceived opposition to the government. The MFWA studies buttresses concerns expressed by media analysts on what they term the politically partisan orientations of the media in Ghana and their negative effects on the media role in improving the quality of the country's governance at all levels (see Karikari, 2014; Blay-Ahmihere, 2012).

From the above, it seems plausible to argue that the mainstream media in Ghana cannot be relied upon to play an effective role in pushing the country's decentralization forward due to the issues that entangle them. Whether the CR sector is better positioned to push this agenda better is my intellectual puzzle that requires empirical answers.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESIGN APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

Philosophically, the research follows the constructivist *ontology* and the interpretive *epistemology* of research. This paradigm allows a researcher to understand a phenomenon under investigation from the perspectives, perceptions, opinions and beliefs of the study participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Sarantakos, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Adopting this paradigm has been deemed suitable for understanding how the study participants viewed the role of CR in promoting quality governance in the local governance system of Ghana and to describe and explicate the meaning and essence that individuals and institutions share on the phenomenon. More specifically, the approach does not only enable the researcher to understand the meanings the study participants attached to the principles of CR, but to also interpret how their understanding of the principles influenced the perceptions they attached to the role of this type of radio in the local governance. As well, associated tensions and challenges have been unearthed. Additionally, the approach has made it possible to describe the local governance related programmes broadcast on Royals FM and to establish the actual experiences of their impact on the good governance principles of participation, accountability and responsiveness at the Wenchi Assembly.

Interpretivism, as the framework within which qualitative research is conducted, the study adopted the qualitative method. This allows textual descriptions of the research findings to capture the emotions, feelings and opinions of the participants (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). This would not have been possible if for instance the qualitative methods were adopted to present the study findings in numerical forms (Creswell, 2009; Sarantakos, 2005). The method enabled the people of the Wenchi Municipal Area to provide rich descriptions of their day-to-day experiences with Royals FM's engagement on issues at its local Assembly. The qualitative approach made it possible to be flexible, to avoid reliance on pre-determined assumptions and to focus on the meaning of key issues raised by participants, taking note of contradictions or inconsistencies in the respondents' perspectives (Creswell, 2004). By probing responses further and having more in-depth discussions with the various respondents about their perceptions and unique experiences, it was possible to discover meaning the various participants brought on what was happening at the moment (Patton, 2002).

Despite its numerous advantages, the qualitative strategy has some limitations. As virtually all the sources cited here have pointed out, and as has been experienced in this study, it is expensive and time-consuming, not to mention its reliance on a relatively smaller number of participants due to the nature of the collection and analysis of data.

The study adopted the case investigation approach, focusing on Royals FM to conduct an extensive and in-depth study on the station and as Yin (1993) puts it,

within its real-life context and to provide a detailed account of the findings within the time frame. The use of the strategy was particularly beneficial as it enabled the use of theory or conceptual categories that guided the research and analysis of data (Yin, 1993; Meyer (2001). In other words, the case study strategy made it possible to draw on the theories and concepts used in the study, to design a framework for guiding the data collection and analysis (Gummesson, 1988). This framework is explained in detail in point 3.5 on the data presentation and analysis.

This is in contrast with grounded theory or ethnography, which presupposes that theoretical perspectives are grounded in and emerge from first-hand data. According the sources cited above, this approach can put a researcher in severe danger of spending considerable time in gathering basic information and providing description without meaning due to a lack of pre-understanding.

The rest of the chapter details the specific features of the methodology: study population, sampling procedures, sources of data, data collection techniques, techniques of data analysis and presentation and ethical considerations.

2.2. STUDY POPULATION

The targeted population of the study consisted of institutions at the national and local levels that are key stakeholders in CR in Ghana or in the country's local governance system. The responses of the officials of these institutions helped meet the objectives of the study (Sarantakos, 2005; Kuada, 2012). The national level institutions were the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and the GCRN.

The local level ones were the GCRN's member stations, Traditional Authorities and the MMDAs. Thus each of the 26 GCRN member stations and those of the 270 MMDAs that have CR stations within the 10 administrative regions of the country, constituted a significant part of the study population. The others were the Traditional Authority System at the local level, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and CSOs.

Individuals and groups of persons who were either directly involved in the governance-related activities of the various radio stations or experienced the impact of the governance activities of the stations, formed part of the population. The academic community was included to select an individual with expert knowledge on the media and governance and whose experiences could illuminate the issues under investigation.

2.3. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE

The study applied purposive sampling to select the participants and institutions for the study. The goal was to select a CR station, national and local level institutions that best suited the purpose of the study. To achieve this, I used the information-rich or positive cases approach recommended by Porta (2009) to help in targeting participants from whom information obtained served as a great source of learning.

To enhance the validity of information provided, the study adopted the multi-informant approach. Information provided by one informant was checked against that provided by other informants; discrepancies among different informants' reports were also resolved through this approach (Meyer, 2001).

2.3.1. RATIONALE FOR THE SELECTION OF ROYALS FM FOR THE STUDY

The selection of the local level institutions and individuals began with the CR station. For the radio station, key criteria adopted looked out for the following:

i. Experiences and capacities to mobilize its community members to formulate proposals and demands to local government and maintain advocacy pressure to bring local government to respond; and
ii. Management and workers who worked closely with community-based organizations and had the expertise in facilitating the involvement of these organizations in the radio on local governance issues.

The selection process of Royals FM in the Wenchi Municipal Assembly was inspired mainly by empirical survey data from two ground-breaking studies conducted on CR in Ghana involved six stations. The first survey by Diedong and Naaikuur purposively sampled stations across the 10 regions of Ghana with the key objective to highlight their significant socio-economic, cultural and political impacts on the local communities (see Diedong & Naaikuur, 2012). Royals FM was singled out for its ability to manoeuvre the political partisan pressures exerted on its management during a nationally very decisive moment in the 2008 General Elections in the country, a case that is analysed in Chapter Eight of the thesis and for using field-based and participatory environmental programmes that mobilized and educate sections of its community members on their rights to resist illegal exploitations of timber and to highlight the responsibilities of the Wenchi DA to put in place by-laws on timber-logging to stream operations in the sector. As a significant outcome, the Wenchi Municipal Assembly was constrained by strengthening the by-laws on the management of forest resources to ensure that timber contractors would restrict their activities to demarcated areas and be committed to compensate the communities for their detrimental activities to the communities' interests.

The environmental programme was based on a project intervention dubbed Natural Resources and Environmental Governance initiated by an environmental NGO known as Kasa with funding from a consortium of international NGOs, including Care International and the National International Development Programme, known as the SNV. The project was implemented under the umbrella of the GCRN and involved a number of selected CR stations located across Ghana. Due to the sterling impact made on its communities through the project, Royals FM received a Certificate of Appreciation from the sponsors as shown in Plate 1 in Appendix 1.

In the sampling process, it took into account the said study that had been conducted six years ago. There was the need to update knowledge on the operations of the

Royals FM in line with the objectives of the present study, to avoid biases. The opportunity for this came up between October and November, 2014 when I was involved in a national survey commissioned by the GRCN. The study was towards the formulation of what is termed, GCRN's Non-partisanship Code of Conduct for operants of its member stations in a bid to maintain the non-partisan character of CR in the country.

Ten stations were selected from across regions of the Ghana based primarily on their perceived level of engagement in local governance issues and the peculiarities of the general political contexts in which the stations operated. Participants in the study were drawn from a wide range of CR actors, and included community members as well as other stakeholders in local governance. As a member of the GCRN, I visited Radio Ada, Royals FM and RADFORD FM that were geographically located in the southern, central and northern zones.

Even as I worked within the framework of the GCRN, I was interested in finding answers to which stations were facilitating or collaborating with CSOs in their work on local governance. This question was neither pertinent to the GCRN's studies nor had it ever been touched upon in any other earlier study. To obtain answers, I asked my colleagues to pay attention and capture similar incidences of collaboration.

In August 2015, the GCRN organized a workshop to draw up the said code based on the case study findings. It was discovered that, despite the generality in their experiences with partisanship, there were remarkable degrees of successes and failures in the ways in which each station responded to the challenges.

I took the opportunity to present my thesis proposal for general feedback from the workshop participants, who were drawn from almost all the GCRN's member stations. It was intriguing that while the other researchers said they had not found evidence of stations-CBOs collaborations on local governance, I had found evidence of this at Royals FM. In view of the study objectives and in the light of the available data from the case studies, the workshop participants agreed that Royals F.M was the most suitable case to study.

Following the selection of the Royals FM, the next level was the selection of the Station's respondents as well as other relevant local level institutions and their representatives. These were grouped into the following categories:

(a) From the radio station, these were the Executive Director, a member of the Executive Council (EC), the governing body of the station, and the focal programme producers on local governance. These were thought to be best positioned to respond to pertinent issues on policy, management and programming.

(b) From the traditional governance system, also known as the chieftaincy institution, a Traditional Ruler from the Wenchi Traditional Council, an umbrella organization of the chiefs in the Wenchi Traditional Area who was

also a Government Appointee to the Wenchi Municipal Assembly, was selected. The involvement of the Traditional Ruler as a Key Informant was based on a number of strategic reasons. The chieftaincy institution is an important stakeholder in Ghana's local governance. It is a requirement for chiefs within the various MMDAs to be consulted on some important issues and decisions. Besides, the chieftaincy is a key institution from which the government appoints representatives to the MMDAs based primarily on the individual's special expertise to contribute to the effective running of the Assemblies. Above all, the chieftaincy institution has been enjoined to be non-partisan in the public life of Ghana and to uphold the highest degree of moral authority. From the above considerations, the Traditional Ruler Key Informant was expected to be well abreast not only with the affairs of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly, but also the activities of Royals FM. By his political neutrality in particular, the Interviewee was expected to assume a non-partisan stance and be on a high moral ground in his responses to the issues.

c) Targeting local NGOs and CBOs with a view to seek information on collaborations between CSOs and Royals FM in holding the DA accountable, an NGO known as the *ResourceLink* and a CBO known as the Wenchi Youth and Development Association (WYDA) were selected from among the numerous CSOs in the Wenchi Municipal Area. The choice was based on their involvement in local governance issues in collaborations with Royals FM. The respective Heads of the organizations were the participants.
d) From the Wenchi Municipal Assembly, the Presiding Member (PM), an elected Head from amongst the elected Assembly members who presides in the Assembly meetings and two Assembly Members were selected. Apart from his position in the Assembly, the PM reputably worked very closely with the CR station on the Assembly issues and was deemed knowledgeable on the issues to be discussed. The two Assembly members were qualified by Royals FM as the Coordinators of the local governance programmes, liaising between the Station and the Wenchi Municipal Assembly on the programmes.

e) Community-level participants were selected from the Wenchi Township, the base of Royals FM and from two outlying villages. These formed focus groups discussion (FGD) participants. The villages were Akete and Agubie. From the map of Wenchi Municipal Assembly contained in Appendix 5, they are located in opposite directions within about 15 kilometres from the Wenchi town. A set of criteria for their selection were easy accessibility, deprivation of basic amenities and places that had never been visited by Royals FM in its outreach programmes. The involvement of the two villages was for the main purpose of comparing their data with those in the Wenchi Township particularly in the area of the impact of the radio programmes. The decision to select these particular village communities based on the said considerations was taken jointly with Royals FM and the Wenchi Assembly.

For selecting the above participants, the snowball sampling method was adopted. The primary consideration was that the individual participants were known for their civic consciousness or activism as well as on Royal FM's local governance engagements. Strong consideration was given to gender balance in order to possibly get the gender perspectives on the issues. In the selection process, a few individuals were initially identified with the help of the Assembly members of the Electoral Areas, together with opinion leaders. Those who were contacted from that stage became sources for contacting others till the required number of participants in the groups was reached. It was interesting how the exercise was easy in the Ghanaian context, an indication that people residing in small towns and villages can be easily familiar with the socio-political leanings of their neighbours. The number of participants in each group was nine made up of males and females as presented in Table 2.1 below.

The next level after the selection of the local level participants was that of the national level. Thus the following representative officials from the GCRN and the MLGRD were selected:

i. From the GCRN was the Lead Training Facilitator. He had not only been a Founding Member of the GCRN, but also previously worked as the General Manager of Radio Ada, one of the founding stations of the Network, a position he held for 10 years; and
ii. From the MLGRD which derives its mandate from the 1992 Constitution to ensure good governance and balanced development of MMDAs, a Legal Officer was selected. The Officer was considered as being in the position to speak to a wide range of the relevant issues with particular insight in the legal issues on Ghana's local governance.

In addition to the above, a Communication Scholar of international standing from the University of Ghana, Legon was selected as a Key Informant Interviewee. As a renowned communication scholar he has written extensively on the media in Ghana. He is also been a former Director General of the GBC and a board chairman of many of the state-owned print media houses.

The total sample size obtained from the selection from the above categories of respondents was 39. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below give break downs of the categories and number of respondents.

Table 2.1: Local Level Respondents

Category of Respondent/s	**No**	**Totals**
Executive Director, Royals	1	1
EC member	1	1
Programmes producers	7 (4 males and 3 females)	7
Community Representatives for the 3 Focus Groups	7 participants in each Focus Group (3 males and 4 female each)	21

PM of the Wenchi Assembly	1	1
Assembly Members	2	2
Traditional Ruler	1	1
CSOs	2	2
Sub-total	**22**	**36**

Source: Self-construct: December, 2018

Table 2.2: National Level Respondents

Institution	Designation	Total
GCRN	Lead Training Facilitator	1
MLGRD	A Deputy Legal Officer	1
Communication Expert	Communication Scholar	1
Sub-total		**3**

Source: Self-construction: December, 2018

2.4. SOURCES OF DATA AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The research relied on both primary data and secondary data. The primary data were gathered from FGDs and in-depth interviews. The FGDs enabled free discussions for exploring and clarifying the views of the participants in ways that would be less easily accessible in one-to-one interviews (Cresswell, 2009; Kuada, 2012).

In view of the explorative nature of the study, the goal of the interviews was to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee, and to understand why he or she came to have this particular perspective. To meet this goal, King (1994:15, cited in Meyer, 2001) recommends that one have "a low degree of structure imposed on the interviewer, a preponderance of open questions, a focus on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee rather than abstractions and general opinions". In line with these recommendations, the collection of primary data in this study consisted of unstructured interviews.

To build trust between the researcher and the interviewees, which is very important in relying on interviews as the primary data collection method (Kvale, 2009), I addressed this issue by establishing a procedure of how to approach the interviewees. For the national level interviewees, I called them on the phone first to explain the key features of the project and out-lined the broad issues to be addressed in the interview. The interview dates and times were also agreed with them. A similar approach was used for the radio station. But at that level, because Royals F.M was expected to play a facilitative role in getting the other community level respondents, a prepared schedule indicating dates, times and who to be interviewed

was sent to the Station's Management in good time. This was particularly important to secure time from the participants for the interviews as they were involved in various forms of work.

My involvement with the GCRN as indicated in Chapter Seven was certainly useful. Through that I was very familiar with Royals FM's Management and with almost all the national level interviewees. The only one I had to make an official request to enable me find was the Legal Officer from the MLGRD, who had hitherto been unknown to me.

Data was gathered over a period of 1 month, February 2017. The community level interviews took 3 weeks following an agreed schedule. The majority of the interviews were tape-recorded, and I could thus concentrate fully on asking questions and responding to the interviewees' answers.

Whilst the local level interviews and discussions were done face-to-face between the researcher and the participants, the national-level ones were conducted via phone. The phone interviews saved time and cost because the base of the study is located about 800 kilometres from Accra, where all the participants are based. These interviews followed the local level ones for a strategic purpose of reinforcing or contrasting some of the findings at the local level.

The venues and times of the interviews and FGDs were decided upon jointly between the interviewers and the interviewees to give maximum convenience to the two parties. The radio level interviews and discussions were done at the Station's premises and outside the peak activity period of the station. Since some of the respondents were part-time workers with regular jobs elsewhere, late afternoon was considered most suitable.

The local level officials, namely; the NCCE's District Director, the PM, the *ResourceLink* and the WYDA, were interviewed in their offices at regular working hours. But the Traditional Ruler was interviewed in his palace in keeping with the Ghanaian custom of respecting the status of such leaders. A significant thing to note about this interview was how the Interviewee broke tradition that dictates that such personalities speak to strangers only through their linguists and in native languages. Instead, the Interviewee answered the questions directly posed to him in the English language.

For the FGDs, the Wenchi Township group session was held at a central location, known as the Community Centre for easy accessibility. Those of the two villages took place at the chiefs' palaces.

To facilitate free expression, the discussions were conducted in the native language of the participants, facilitated by myself with the assistance of an interpreter. Each of the discussions lasted for two hours, from 3 to 5 pm. The timing was important particularly for the villagers who were mainly farmers.

It was important to avoid dominance by a few people as often happens with FGDs. To do this, the participants were told from the beginning of the discussions, to respect the right of others to speak even if they did not agree with their views (Kvale, 2009). This approach proved particularly important in the male dominated society of Ghana, where the male members in the group might want to undermine their female counterparts. The criteria for the selection of the participants also to double-check on the potential gender dominance because their characteristics indicated earlier ensured that both male and female participants were relatively equally empowered.

A summary of data collection instruments and key issues for the interviews and discussions are presented in tables 2.3 and 2.4 below. In general, the interviews and discussion sessions made possible the identification of trends in the perceptions and opinions expressed by the participants on the issues under discussion as Krueger and Casey (2008) point out. In particular, the local level discussions enabled the researcher to study my participants in a more relaxed and natural manner than other research tools could have done. This, in my view, gave high "face validity" to the findings, which makes them appear believable.

The main sources of secondary data included documents, reports, and media channels of newspapers, the internet, radio and television.

Table 2.3: Data collection methods and tools used and issues discussed with local level participants

Category of respondents	Research Instrument	Main Issues Discussed
EC Member	Interview Guide	• Background information on Royals FM: establishment, objectives and mission and adherence to these • Composition of the EC • Understanding of the functions of the EC • General understanding of CR. • Perceptions on the role of CR in Ghana's local governance system. • Station's engagement in local governance: actual radio programmes, how they promote good governance principles. Impact of programmes. • Challenges associated with the station's engagement in local governance programmes.
Executive Director	Interview Guide	• Background information on Royals FM: establishment, objectives and mission and adherence to these. • Management and organizational issues: number and categories of workers, education and training. Staff related challenges. • Issues of financing and related challenges • Perceptions on the role of CR in Ghana's local governance system. • Station's engagement in local governance: actual radio programmes, how they promote good governance principles of participation, accountability and responsiveness. Impact of programmes. • Challenges associated with the station's engagement in local governance programmes. • Collaborations with other organizations and institutions e.g. NGOs and CBOs, governmental on local governance • Issues on inconsistencies and contradictions emanating from other interviews
Lead Programme Producers	FGD Guide	• Capacity issues: education and training • Perceptions on the role of CR in Ghana's local governance system. • Station's engagement in local governance: actual radio programmes, mode of production, how they promote good governance principles of participation, accountability and responsiveness. Impact of

		programmes. • Challenges associated with the station's engagement in local governance programmes. • Collaborations with other organizations and institutions e.g. NGOs and CBOs, governmental
Community members	FDG guide	• Understanding of CR and how they related the understanding to Royals FM: whether they thought Royals FM was a CR station. • Understanding of difference between CR and other radio stations. • Perceptions on the role of CR in local governance based on their understanding of CR. • Whether they felt Royals FM was engaging in local governances: knowledge on actual programmes on local governance, how they felt programmes were promoting good governance principles at their local Assembly in comparison with other types of radio. • Impact of the local governance programmes: satisfactions and dissatisfaction of Royals FM engagement.
CBOs	Interview guide	• Background information on the organizations. Founders, missions, visions, objectives, sources of funding. • Understanding of the role of CBOs in local governance. • Knowledge on collaborations with CR on local governance. • Collaborations with Royals FM: activities of the collaborations • Possible impacts of the collaborations. • Challenges associated with the collaborations.
Official from the NCCE	Interview guide	• Understanding of CR and how the participant related his understanding to Royals FM: whether he thought Royals FM was a CR station. • Understanding of difference between CR and other radio stations. • Collaborations between the NCCE and the CR station in promoting on civic education: areas of collaborations and impact, challenges.
Assembly Person	Interview guide	• Understanding of CR and how they related the understanding to Royals FM: whether they thought Royals FM was a CR station. • Understanding of difference between CR and other radio stations. • Perceptions on the role of CR in local governance based on their understanding of CR.

		• Whether they felt Royals FM was engaging in local governance: knowledge on actual programmes on local governance, whether they felt programmes were promoting good governance principles at their local Assembly in comparison with other types of radio. • Whether they felt Royals FM was promoting their roles as Assembly members. • Impact of the local governance programmes: satisfactions and dissatisfactions.
Traditional Ruler (Chief)	Interview guide	• Understanding of CR and how he related the understanding to Royals FM: whether he thought Royals FM was a CR station. • Understanding of difference between CR and other radio stations. • Perceptions on the role of CR in local governance based on their understanding of CR. • Whether he felt Royals FM was engaging in local governances: knowledge on actual programmes on local governance, whether they felt programmes were promoting good governance principles at the local Assembly • Impact of the local governance programmes: satisfactions and dissatisfactions particularly on culture-related ones.

Source: Self-construction, December 2018

Table 2.4: Data collection methods and tools used and issues discussed with local level participants

Category of Respondents	Research Instrument	Main Issues Discussed
GCRN's Lead Training Facilitator	Interview Guide	• Perceptions on role of CR in Ghana's local governance system in the midst of other types of radio in the country. • GCRN's position on the role of member stations' engagement on local governance. • Possible policy level interviews put in place by GCRN that can enhance the role of member stations' in local governance. • General challenges GCRN encountered in promoting CR in the country. • Issues on inconsistencies and contradictions emanating from other interviews
Deputy Leader Officer of the MLGRD	Interview Guide	• Understanding of CR. • Understanding of difference between CR and other radio stations. • Perceptions on the role of CR in local governance based on their understanding of CR. • Specific ways CR stations can promote the good governance principles as legally enshrined. • Whether the legal provisions on good governance can post barriers to the effective role of CR in local governance • How these potential barriers can be overcome.
Communication Expert	Interview Guide	• General overview of the media landscape in Ghana with respect to its governance role in the country. • Specific ways CR stations can promote the good governance principles as legally enshrined. • Systemic, legal and social barriers that pose barriers to the effective role of CR in local governance • How these potential barriers can be overcome. • Issues on inconsistencies and contradictions emanating from other interviews

Source: Self-construction, 20 January, 2018

2.5. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

Data analysis was done after the data collection to facilitate the interpretation of the results to make sense out of the text vis-à-vis the research questions as Agyedu et al. (2013) have advised. Following the views of Creswell (2009), the process involved preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, and making sense of the larger meaning of the data.

The process started with the transcription of the recordings followed by a careful editing and cleaning of the data to ensure its accuracy and consistency with the study questions. The data was then coded into meaningful categories and codes with reference to the theoretical and conceptual issues in the literature chapters (see Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Paton, 2002). Specifically, the coding was in respect of the key themes in the research questions. In question one on participants' perceptions of the role of CR in Ghana's local governance, the data was categorized along the core tenets of CR, namely; community ownership, not-for-profit, non-partisanship and exclusive use of indigenous languages. The data in respect of the second question were coded according to the good governance principles of participation, accountability and responsiveness identified in Chapter Five and in reference to the normative media good functions of civic forum, watchdog and agenda-setting discussed in the Chapter Three.

I developed a framework encompassing the above codes before collecting the data. This approach was helpful in overcoming a difficulty in focusing the research questions and the analysis of the data because the research questions appeared too vague and broad. This was useful in guiding the collection and analysis of the data, even though scholars argue that such an approach can generate researcher biases and prejudices (Meyer, 2001, for example). I adopted Gummesson's (1988, cited in Meyer, 2001) recommendation for dealing with the problems of biases and prejudices by making conscious efforts to set them aside during the analysis. This enabled me to be open-minded and receptive to new and surprising ideas that did not fall within the pre-determined categories.

The avoidance of the biases and prejudices made it possible to analyse the data inductively by avoiding imposing preconceived ideas gathered through the theoretical understandings on the phenomenon under investigation on the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Instead much time was spent on the data analysis for understanding to emerge from the data as Kuada (2012) recommend. Theories discussed under the literature review provided a pre-understanding of the issues under investigation (see Bryman & Bell, 2011). The data collected were then used to analyse the extent to which the existing theories explain the issues investigated and at the same time produce new insights that emerge from the data (Kuada, 2012).

The GCRN's documents (especially the Codes on community ownership, non-profit orientation, non-partisanship and local language use) were primarily useful in

establishing the facts as each of them provided me with some perspectives for validation in the interviews. For example, the findings revealed community level dissatisfaction with the adherence to each of the Codes, a situation that had a level of negative influence on participants perceptions on the role of Royals FM in local governance. To enhance the analysis, I compared the study findings with earlier studies for consistencies and inconsistencies, and for the purposes of making generalizations of some of the issues that have national, continental or global implications.

Each question formed a separate chapter and the discussions sought to tie together the findings in relation to theory, literature review or any other issue relevant to the study (Kvale, 2009). As description forms the bedrock of qualitative reporting (Paton, 2002) thick and rich descriptions formed the basis for the analysis.

2.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Appropriate and adequate measures were taken to address concerns about reliability and validity that are crucial in ensuring the trustworthiness, consistency and accuracy of the findings (Kuada, 2012). To validate the findings, I adopted what Creswell (2009) terms, *user member checking* and the *use of rich, thick description*, respectively, to check the accuracy of the data from the stand point of the researcher, the participants, or the readers of an account, and to convey the findings.

The former method involves conducting follow-up interviews with participants in the study and providing an opportunity for them to comment on the findings. There were follow-up interviews with sections of the respondents focused on some critical or controversial issues that had been raised in the earlier interviews. These involved mainly the participants in the radio station FGDs, the official from the Wenchi Municipal Assembly and the Traditional Ruler Key Informants. Most notable among such issues was controversy about Royals FM watchdog role in exposing corruption at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. A particular example was a story recounted in the FGDs with the programmes producers related to the exposure of financial misappropriations by officials of the Assembly. Crucial as this story was in relation to tackling corruption at the Assembly, it generated some critical comments from the above Key Informant Interviewees who both saw it as politically motivated. The bone of contention was that the said expose was an isolated incident meant to make the NDC government, under which it was done, unpopular to pave way for the NPP Party to win the 2016 General Elections in the area. This claim was tied to a perceived partisanship of Royals FM, held by the same respondents, a situation discussed extensively under the data analysis chapters as having negatively affected the station's image as an independent medium for promoting accountability.

The follow-up interviews were conducted in May 2017, three months after the first aimed to find out whether or not the respondents would still stand by those allegations and the counter ones. The interviews were done face-to-face again for the main reason that it would have been culturally offensive to try to interview the

Traditional Ruler on the phone. For the national level respondents, sections of the transcripts that were to be quoted in the analysis were sent to them by email for them to read and comment on. Apart from a few minor corrections, the participants had no objection to the established facts. But for want of time and resources, the follow-up interviews would have involved all the other respondents.

The latter strategy of validating involving the use of descriptions was adopted, proof of which can be seen in Chapters Eight and Nine. Such detailed descriptions of the setting, such as providing many perspectives about the various themes, make the results more realistic as it serves to transport readers to the research setting and give the discussion and element of shared experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Reliability has been accounted for to ensure that if other researchers adopted the approach in this study, the same findings would be produced, or that if the study be repeated using the same researcher and respondents it would yield the same findings. This will enable future researchers to compare this study with theirs in order to determine whether the findings hold true in other contexts (Meyer, 2001; Creswell, 2009). The researcher followed Kuada's recommendation to provide detailed descriptions of the study context in terms of geographical location, names of stakeholder institutions and designations of their representatives as participants and the socio-cultural and economic characters of the study location.

2.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical concerns in research border on the rights of participants to be made aware of the purpose of a research, to accept or refuse to participate in a research activity as well as respect of their privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. This rests on adherence to the principle of 'informed consent' by researchers and following research protocols in carefully preparing, explaining and consulting before any data collecting begins (Bell, 2005).

This study followed the Institutional Research Review (IRB) protocols of the Aalborg University, which require their researchers and affiliates to obtain the consent of participants to conduct interviews and to assure them of the confidentiality in the use of the information obtained. The researcher carefully explained to the participants before an interview session that the research was being conducted for a PhD project at the Aalborg University. It was stressed that participation in the study was voluntary and that no one or group of persons was compelled to participate against their will. Assurances were given to all participants that confidentiality and anonymity would be strictly maintained. No questions were posed in the FGD or the interviews that was deleterious to the participants. Care was taken in dealing with the participants, so that they did not suffer from embarrassment or fear. During the interviewing, care was taken to avoid the use of any methods injurious or potentially injurious to the participants.

2.8. STRUCTURE OF STUDY

The study is structured into ten chapters. Chapter One sets out the background of the study, research questions and continues with the significance of the study. Chapter Two has looked at the methodology of the study. It has highlighted the selection of key informants and respondents and their basic characteristics, the data processing and analysis approaches, considerations of validity and reliability as well as ethical issues.

Chapter Three has started with the literature review. It delineates the normative media roles in governance as providing a civic-fora for public participation in development and governance discourses; serving as watchdog for highlighting governmental wrongdoings and exposing corruption; and being an agenda-setter that reveals urgent social problems for government actions to solve them. Empirical evidence on the impact of these media functions reported across the world, have been cited in the chapter. Most importantly, the chapter underscores that, although evidences of the impact of CR on local governance exists from studies across the developing world, there appears to be a dearth of literature on systematic studies along the above normative media functions. This is the gap the study seeks to fill.

Chapter Four has discussed the theoretical background of the study. It has provided a historical overview of the main discourses in literature on the main theories of development communication with highlights on key features of modernization, dependency and participatory paradigms. It has paid special attention to the place accorded to governance in the various development paradigms, noting how under the modernization approaches, until the emergence of the participatory paradigm, which now places emphasis on people's participation and the accountability and responsiveness in development process, and where communication has assumed a catalytic role.

Chapter Five has been dedicated to clarifying the concepts of CR and good local governance as well as their related ones and developing a conceptual model. The conceptual model has demonstrated the interconnectedness amongst the good governance indicators of participation, accountability and responsiveness and the core principles of CR, namely community ownership, not-for-profit, non-partisanship and the exclusive use indigenous languages of communities as well as illustrated the central role of CR to promote the good governance principles using the normative media functions of civic-forum, watchdog and agenda-setting.

Chapter Six deepens the review started in Chapter One on Ghana's decentralization and local governance system with a special focus on the current system. It has shown that, although Ghana has a long history of local governance dating back to colonial days, the current decentralization programme dates back to nearly two and a half decades. The chapter has critically examined the current local governance system to identify specific challenges that hinder the effective realization of the principles set out in the country's decentralization programme to attain good

governance good governance and how CR can contribute to addressing the challenges. The main ones are a central-level capture of decisions and resources, central-level appointment of the DCEs that creates a downward accountability deficit on the part of the appointees, political partisanship in an otherwise non-partisan system, and corruption at the Assemblies, which fleches resources for development for private gains.

The discussions in Chapter Seven are in two parts. Part One has detailed presentation of Royals FM's profile. Part Two has discussed the socio-politico-economic context of Wenchi Municipal area, which is the defined community of Royals FM. Here, the geographical location and size of the study area and state of state of development are presented. Among the development challenges identified are inadequate basic amenities of health, education and sanitation.

Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten are the empirical work. Since the study has two specific questions, the data presentation and analysis have been presented as such. Chapter Eight has examined participants' perceptions on the role of CR in Ghana's local governance system as compared to other broadcasting systems in the country. It has demonstrated that, in principle, CR is a unique medium for the promotion of good local governance, but it has also been revealed that the potential for the community stations to play their governance role effectively depends on their adherence to their core principles indicated above. Chapter Nine has highlighted specific programmes that have been found at Royals FM that promote good governance at the Wenchi Assembly and some challenges encountered. Finally, Chapter Tern gives a summary of the findings and conclusion of the study; policy interventions and interventions at the levels of Royals FM and the GCRN.

2.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter is mainly concerned with delineation of the methods adopted in generating, collating, and sorting of data for the study. The chapter showed that the study is exploratory, interpretative and descriptive, hence qualitative paradigm forms the best methodological design suited for the resolution of the identified research problems. The rationale for adopting qualitative paradigm, phenomenological approach, and case study design for the study, was amply discussed in this chapter. This allows for a well-validated study and retrieval of first-hand information from a GRCN member station and individuals with lived experience on the issue at hand. Population for the study included institutions at the national level (NCA, MLGRD, GCRN), at the local level (GCRN member stations, NCCE's district offices, CSO's) and Traditional Authorities and their officials. Other individuals, groups and organizations constituting the population were itemized in the chapter.

This chapter delineated the sampling strategy adopted for the study. Purposive and snowball sampling technique was adopted for selecting participants, institutions and organizations. In all, 39 participants from respective organizations and communities

were selected. This chapter further elaborated on the instruments for the study underscoring the relevance of each of the instruments (Focus Group Discussion and In-depth interviews), sources of data (primary and secondary) and the rigours of collecting reliable and well-validated data.

Towards the end of this chapter, approach to data analysis and presentation was outlined. The emerging themes, principle of citizen participation, governance accountability, responsiveness and civic education were categorized for analysis. The chapter demonstrated that these categorizations were instrumental to the resolution of each of the research questions identified in introductory chapter. This chapter provided ample insight into the two strategies that made the finding of the study reliable and well-validated, namely: 1) validation of elicited data by repeated trips to the field for confirmatory purposes; and 2) vivid and rich descriptions of the data and results. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations as stipulated by the Institutional Research Review (IRB) protocols of the Aalborg University to ensure a safe and well-validated study with codes of ethics ensuring confidentiality and consent of participants, as the hallmark.

CHAPTER 3. MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This first part of the literature review chapters is dedicated to discussing what is known about the field of media and governance in the context of development, giving a deeper insight into the issues. The overall goal here is to provide an empirical underpinning for the study by showing how the media in various cases have contributed to quality governance outcomes. The analysis here is of special importance to the study because it sets the conceptual framework for the data analysis of this study, as captured in the conceptual model below. The chapter starts with more clarifications of basic concepts of the media as watchdog, civic-forum and agenda-setting introduced in Chapter One.

3.1. THE MEDIA AS WATCHDOG, CIVIC-FORUM AND AGENDA-SETTER

Perhaps the most well-known conception of the media's governance role is the one by Norris's cited in Chapter One, which specifies that the media serves as a watchdog, civic-forum and an agenda-setter. But Norris's view can be taken to be a refinement of those by earlier scholars. For instance, Altschull (1984) summarized the media's governance functions in an acronym, AWA. This means that the media were expected to play an adversarial, watchdog and agenda-setting roles. With regard to all three aspects, the media were viewed as independent actors and were to set themselves against political and economic leadership (being adversarial); maintain a steady watch on the leadership, (being watchdog);and letting the people know what is important and what is trivial (setting public agenda).

The watchdog function of the media is rooted in what is termed the media accountability role in governance (Servaes, 2006; Ali, 2006). The central view in the literature is that the media is to act as a watchdog over society by keeping a 'critical eye' and giving an 'attentive ear' over decision-makers and the performance of public and private institutions. The aim is to highlight policy failures, maladministration, abuse of power, corruption and scandals involving these leaders. By implication, when the media perform their public watchdog role effectively, they serve as critical checks on government misuse of power or incompetence, and enables citizens to demand good governance.

The importance of the watchdog function on development is not far-fetched. Among others, it can ensure that development policy formulation and implementation are undertaken in the critical view of the public with the media acting as their eyes. Needless to say this can lead to real improvements of the living conditions of the people, especially the poor and the marginalized.

Corruption is an extremely important area, which the watchdog role can greatly affect. Robust and vigilant media systems have been underlined as being powerful

instruments against corruption. Servaes (2006) argues that the media can play an important role in fighting corruption in society in interconnected ways. The media can raise public awareness about the prevalence of corruption in a society, pointing out its causes, consequences and possible remedies, as well as investigating and reporting on incidences. By this, the media can raise corruption as an important governance issue, and can create a space for discussion on the canker to form public consensus to fight it. Furthermore, a free media and pluralistic media environment can reveal various forms of social injustices, inequities and violations wherever they occur, which can reinforce social values. Thus, when the media are working well, they prevent corruption via their monitoring activities. Transparency and free flow of information lie at the heart of accountability; here, the primary role of the media in promoting government accountability lies in the dissemination of information. In the view of Ojo (2005), quality and credible information arms citizens about government programmes, policies and activities to enable them monitor and scrutinize government actions as well as to demand change.

The importance of the media watchdog role in tackling corruption as a developmental issue cannot be overstated. Virtually all analyses on development and governance (World Bank, 2006; UNDP, 1997) tag corruption as one of the worst economic injustices in the world as public sector corruption diverts resources meant for the public good for individual benefits. In most developing countries, including Ghana, the canker of corruption can be said to account largely for the continuous deprivation and marginalization of low status people who are the majority. Therefore, the watchdog role is much needed to tackle corruption so as to ensure resource availability for poverty alleviation and the general improvements of the lives of the people.

The accountability function of the media rests on investigative journalism. In many societies state accountability relies on the independence and capacity of the media to investigate and interrogate government policy in the public interest (Coronel, 2005). This is the cardinal means to expose wrong doing relating to policy failures. In a paper, *Corruption and the watchdog role of the news media*, Coronel (2005) elucidates the general characteristics and principles of the media watchdog function to include a wide range of investigative or watchdog journalism. Coronel describes watchdog journalism mainly as expose journalism that can be pursued regardless of where the expose is published or aired, its quality, target, and initiator of the investigation. Following this argument, investigative journalism can target low-level to high-level officials or celebrities, and the subjects can range from small wrong-scale doings involving petty officials like traffic policemen or clerks to high-level political corruption involving millions, even billions of dollars. The sectors of investigations can cut across: wrongdoing in government, malfeasance in the private sector, such as corporations that cause damage to the public interest, as well as non-profits who take money from unsuspecting citizens. Thus watchdogging can involve oversight on both individuals and institutions.

An important dimension of accountability that the media can champion is in the area of competitive multiparty democracy. Voters can use information provided by the

media to hold parties and leaders to account for promises made (Norris, 2006; Ali, 2006). Thus, the media act as catalysts for creating positive governance outcomes by motivating people and governments to enact changes.

Thus the cumulative effect of the media's attentiveness to governance on development, include the checking of the dissipation of public resources through exposing corruption, inducing policy responsiveness and increasing attentiveness to public needs.

The media civic-forum role is by far one of the most viable vehicles of strengthening public participation in governance and decision-making processes (Ojo, 2005). Independent media typically open spaces for public deliberations and debates on major issues (Norris, 2006). As Hyden et al. (2002: 213) note, the media creates "... a notion of communicative spaces in which people can comfortably discuss politics". Thus the media facilitates the expression of multiple voices and views that help individuals form and shape their opinion on matters of importance to them. The weight of public opinion can pressure government to act in the public interest.

The civic-forum role of the media is of particular importance in promoting the democracy component of good governance by helping voters to make informed electoral choices. A free media ensures fair access to the airwaves for campaigns by opposition parties, candidates and groups providing citizens with information to compare and evaluate the retrospective record, prospective policies and leadership characteristics of parties and candidates, providing the essential conditions for informed choice (Norris, 2006; Odugbemi & Norris, 2010). This implies that when media are controlled by a certain interest, they will tend to favour certain political parties and those of their controllers at the expense of the principle of equal access to all political interests.

The concept of agenda-setting is to promote state responsiveness. A free and pluralistic media underpins the responsiveness of democratic states (Norris, 2006; DFID, 2008; Odugemi & Norris, 2010). The media reporting of public interests issues exposes problems in society, brings them to public and political attention and creates pressure for the state to respond rapidly. The argument on the agenda-setting goes further, in that the media have the ability to shape the nature and focus of public discourse because of their control of the means of information dissemination (Tettey, 2010). This way, the media determines to a large extent, the importance and non-importance of an issue in a country or community depending on the visibility and salience put on it. By this, the media can draw the attention of decision-makers to urgent social problems and citizens' concerns by reporting on, and exposing such issues. In other words, the media function as intermediaries by reporting local problems and eliciting timely governmental response. It is against this backdrop that studies suggests that states without a free media have struggled to respond to emerging crisis, while those with a free media have rarely suffered catastrophic famines and other predictable diseases.

The governance role of the media has attracted the attention of the intellectual and development communities, as well as that of the media itself. This is exemplified in

a 2009 study report prepared by Kathy Lines for the BBC World Service Trust. The report, *Governance and the Media: A Survey of Policy Opinion*, aimed to discover from first principles what current thinking about media and governance was among a level of high thinkers and policy makers from the governance, media and development communities. In all, 23 people were interviewed for this report, a mix of those from different parts of the development and media communities, from differently located organizations, and from those based in different geographic locations. The bulk of the interviewees were with development agencies-multilaterals, bilateral and foundations; six were with academics or policy institutes or think tanks and three were with southern organizations or agencies. Among the questions for which answers were sought was how important support for a free and pluralistic media is to governance. A summary of the study findings are as follows:

i) The importance of supporting free and pluralistic media in relation to governance and development outcomes was thought to be increasingly recognized by a wide range of policy makers, academics and practitioners. A minority who questioned whether good governance necessarily precedes economic development still recognize the importance of media in development generally.

ii) There was some evidence to support the perception that policy makers recognize the central role the media played in development more than they did formerly.

iii) The reasons for media receiving more attention are thought to be: changes in political landscapes that can galvanize reactive responses; a growing focus on civil society and participation; the greater impact made by media NGOs and specialist media players and greater focus on political economy and governance agenda generally.

The media has, therefore, been recognized as an important facilitator of citizens' participation in policies that have global implications. For instance, in a paper titled *Hearing the Voices of the Poor: Engaging Good Governance and Poverty Reduction through Media Sector Support*, which is based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ann Hudock draws attention to the critical role of the media in ensuring the success of PRSP policies. The report argues that the media could promote widespread and effective public participation in policy discussions through dialogues and debates by providing timely, clear and relevant policy information to citizens as well as educating them and their representatives on the issues. The media could as well facilitate the expression of diverse views that could go a long way to influence the policies by helping to frame issues for discussions, providing background analysis, and disseminating results of the consultations in ways that could take into account minority or dissenting points of view.

3.2. SOME EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE WATCHDOG, CIVIC-FORUM AND AGENDA-SETTING FUNCTIONS OF THE MEDIA

Where the media work under the right conditions, it can promote positive outcomes. As noted in Chapter One, the most fundamental condition for the effective role of the media in governance consists of a landscape that is underpinned by guarantees of freedoms of expression, of information and of the media (Guseva et al., 2007; McQuail, 2010). Freedom of expression and freedom of the press/media are rooted in the libertarian theory of the press, which defines the media's role in democratic society as the "fourth estate". Edmund Burke (cited in McQuail, 2010) first used the term "fourth estate" in the late eighteenth-century England to refer to the political power possessed by the press, on a par with the other three 'estates' of power in Britain at that time: Lords, Church and Commons. According to Burke, in the relationship with the other elements of power, the press was to have the vested power, ability and freedom to give or withhold publicity information on the activities of the others. More importantly, the press was to have the freedom to report and comment on the deliberations, assemblies and acts of the government. To strengthen the legitimacy of their functions, the media were to distinguish themselves and become, not only as non-state actors and independent of other social factors like the church and the electorate, but also act on behalf of citizens against both state and other interests (McQuail, 2010). In their current usage freedom of expression and of the press are closely interlinked and are often used to mean the same thing. In general the terms border on the respect for the rights and freedoms of every individual human person to hold and express opinion, ideas and thoughts freely, and without interference. This right includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media (Linard & Scirpo, 2002).

The main results of the prevalence of these freedoms are often media independence from government and economic powers, plurality and diversity of ownership. The crucial implications of these conditions include the fact that for example, not only can independent media flourish and be able to freely play their governance functions, access to easy and ready official information by journalists and civil society for investigating and exposing corruption can be guaranteed. In addition, those liberal conditions can give rise to various forms of media ownership, public, commercial and community; such media plurality can invigorate the public sphere by promoting access to communication channels for the expression of diversity of opinions, including those by grassroots people.

Another important condition that can enhance the effectiveness of the media's governance function is to have journalists who are adequately trained to provide citizens with meaningful information and verified news. However, as Khan (2005) among many analysts observe, in many developing countries, journalists, particularly those working in the local language media, do not have enough opportunities to obtain quality training to develop their skills. Khan points out the fact that, in most cases, the media in developing countries cannot afford to pay good

salaries for qualified people. So journalists are normally trained on the job and they may not necessarily have the appropriate background or education to become professional journalists. This observation is a veritable reflection of Ghana's case, as it is in many other African countries, where most of the private media outlets especially radio stations found in the rural and semi-rural parts of the country depend on untrained journalists who are often poorly paid.

The combined effects of the inadequate training and poor financial reward is the unsurprising situation where journalism in many African countries, is associated with many shortcomings dating from the 1990s when press freedom started on the continent (Hyden et al., 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2005). Citing studies conducted in countries across the continent, including those by Kasoma (1997; 1999) and Tanjong and Ngwa (2002), Nyamnjoh (2005) notes that journalists in those countries have been accused of professional impropriety, not only by the governments and other prominent political actors but also by the general public and even by fellow professionals at home and abroad. The author cites a number of country specific cases, including a quote by a veteran journalist to describe the trend in Sierra Leone: "Cheap propaganda, rather than reporting issues as they affect the common man, has become the preoccupation of most of our journalists. Most of them are today partisan, and as such, have fixed ideas that hardly accommodate the views of others" (Sesay, 1998:267-8, in Nyamnjoh, 2005:58). In addition, Nyamnjoh captures a host of all sorts of names that have been used to call journalists in Africa. These range from 'cocktail', 'bread and butter', 'check-book', 'yellow', attack-collect', 'brown-envelop' or 'survival journalism' on the one hand; to 'guerrilla journalism', 'liberation journalism', 'jungle journalism' or 'gutter journalism' on the other hand.

In Ghana, people perceive many journalists can be bribed in the line of their duties. This is an unfortunate phenomenon at a time the country needs good journalism to push the frontiers of the political and socio-economic developments of the country. The conclusion that can be drawn here is that this less than desirable journalistic practice augurs badly for the media's pursuit of the public interests in a way that is independent of political and financial influences.

Notwithstanding the above the above short-comings in the conditions under which the media in the developing countries work to promote good governance, empirical evidences of the impact of watchdog, civic-forum and agenda-setting functions of the media across the world abound indeed.

In this regard, there is a wealth of individual cases that point to the role of the media in exposing corruption in line with. A particular example relate to the watchdog role of the media worth mentioning here is a well-known eventual resignation of Alberto Fujimori from the presidency of Peru following the revelations of wrong doing and corruption by the print and electronic media (UNDP 2002) to show the power of the watchdog function of the media in fighting corruption.

Coronel (2006) reports that South Eastern Asian democracies have seen the press acting like attack dogs unleashed against erring officials and corrupt institutions following the fall of dictatorships and the removal of restrictions on the press. In

Thailand, the press has had a heyday in exposing the illicit commissions officials make from government contracts and the underworld connections of local god-fathers, who either run for public office themselves or finance the candidacies of trusted allies. In the Philippines, malfeasance by both bureaucrats and elected politicians – ranging from policemen extorting small payoffs from erring motorists to multi-million-peso bribes paid to high officials in exchange for tax cuts or state-funded infrastructure projects – are regular fare of newspapers and investigative TV programmes. Journalists have used hidden cameras to show, among other things, wads of cash being dropped into the open drawers of customs employees and tax officials accepting envelopes of bribe money from business persons. Journalists in Indonesia have hounded the trail of corrupt officials, including President Abdurrahman Wahid, who came to power in the country's first democratically held elections in October 1999 and was impeached in July 2001 after his rivals in the legislature accused him of being involved in his masseur's unauthorized withdrawal and disbursement of $3.5 million from the government rice procurement and distribution agency.

In Africa, a typical example can be cited from Sierra Leone where two private radio stations, KISS-FM in Bo and SKY-FM, in Freetown, serialized corruption reports dubbed Mr. Owel focusing on local police corruption. The result was the restructuring of the police administration and the dismissal of some found to have been culpable in corruption allegations (Buckley et al., 2008).

In Ghana, there are numerous examples of the media expose of corruption. Tettey (2010) reports on a revelation of a loan agreement a Ghanaian president, John Agyekum-Kuffour had entered into with a bogus International Finance Consortium in 2002. The Palaver, an opposition newspaper, revealed that the company was only using an acronym similar to that of the International Final Corporation of the World Bank to gain credibility for its dubious operations. The revelation led to pressure by opposition parties, other media organizations, and the public making the government pull out of the agreement.

Other significant ones reported by Azeem (2014) include anti-corruption journalism by Ache journalists like Raymond Archer, Anas Aremeyaw and Manesseh Azure Awuni that have exposed high profile corruption cases, the impact of which had largely been shrouded in secrecy. In the case of Raymond Archer, he has gone to the CHRAJ with issues bordering on alleged corruption and impropriety. Anas and Manasseh have undertaken journalistic investigations at Ghana's borders, the Accra Psychiatric Hospital, the Osu Children's Home, the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA and the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) projects producing revealing reports that called for drastic action.

One of the most notable watchdog works in recent times in the country by Anas (who has gained global fame for his undercover investigations of corruption within Ghana and other African countries) is the capturing of judges on camera receiving bribes to set criminals who were under trial free, and those on football administrators and referees caught in similar ways being bribed to influence match-

fixing and officiating. The video clips on the scandals shown on television stations revealing the high levels of corruption in the country's judicial service and football administration shocked the country. Subsequently, many higher and lower court judges who were implicated in the scandal were sacked by the Ghana's Judicial Service. The President of Ghana's Football Administration (GFA), Kofi Nyantaki suffered the same fate when the Federation of International Football Administrators (FIFA) relieved him of his job with a ban for life from participating in most football activities. Even though these revelations are believed to have led to the murder of a key member of his investigative team, as indicated in Chapter One, Anas has vowed to continue his work. The impact of Anas's investigative works and those of other journalists amply demonstrate the ability of the media to fight corruption in the country.

The Ghanaian media has contributed significantly to Ghana democratic consolidation by enhancing the credibility of the country's elections through their watchdog role, beginning from the 1992 elections that marked the beginning of the Fourth Republic. In each of the elections from 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2008, staff of the private radio stations including community radios, monitored the polls, reporting incidents of irregularities and making it difficult to rig the elections. The vigilant role of the stations, coupled with that of some civil society organizations was said to have made a significant contribution to a change of government from the then ruling National Democratic Council (NDC) to the biggest opposition party, the New National Patriotic Party (NPP) in the 2000 elections (Temin & Smith, 2002).

An important aspect of accountability that this study explores is what is referred to as social accountability. The concept of social accountability has been amply clarified in the next chapter showing that a key feature of its practice involves collaborations between CSOs and the media to promote good governance (see World Bank, 2005). The theoretical underpinnings of social accountability hold that organized citizen groups have great potentials to make profound influences on governance particularly at the local level (Grindle, 2004; Oxhorn et al., 2007). It is further argued that these potentials can be enhanced through collaborations with local media and local government itself (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006; World Bank, 2007). The role of the media in social accountability centres on information dissemination, education and advocacy.

Studies on social accountability have focused on CSOs-media collaborations to monitor state performance to ensure the effective implementation of policies and the judicious use of resources through the tracking of resource flow, monitoring of budget implementation and advocating against corruption (Malena et al., 2004; Giles, 2007: World Bank, 2007). An example is in a report by McNeil and Mumvum published in 2006 titled, A Stocktaking of Social Accountability Initiatives by Civil Society in Anglophone Africa and Social Accountability in the Public Sector: A Conceptual Discussion and Learning Module that documents social accountability practices in 10 Anglophone African countries - Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia Malawi and Zimbabwe. The report shows networks of CSOs working with the media and

governments to mobilize citizens to demand improved services through transparent and accountable policy making processes. The Networks include the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education in Malawi (CSCQBE), the Malawi Health Equity Network, and the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN), all working towards promoting participatory governance and development in the country.

The themes of the social accountability activities coalesced around four areas impacting the development of the African region: decentralization, antipoverty strategies, public service delivery and the Millennium Development Goals as well as corruption. The activities included budget advocacy to improve the participation of ordinary people in budgeting processes and empowerment of the people to hold duty-bearers accountable. A major strategy adopted in many of the cases, was the provision of budget information to promote transparency and accountability.

The most noticeable outcomes of the interventions as reported include enhanced citizen awareness and participation on policy issues. For example, MEJN presented budget information in understandable forms to citizens to increase demand for more information on budget issues including expenditure tracking.

Local media were mainstreamed in the activities to gain wider attention. In one case, a national radio station used MEJNs findings to criticize the government for failing to begin several key projects. In another case, MEJN and the media jointly played a watchdog to expose more than 20 councillors who were found to have misused local budgets. The network used some of the reportage to analyse and scrutinize corruption cases, a number of which were brought to trial as a result of the campaign.

In line with the public-forum function, this study has been unable to find as many examples as in the area of the watchdog one, but there are a few examples on how broadcasting has been used successfully to mobilize public opinion for political participation. According to Amienyi (2004), Western societies have used broadcasting to activate citizen involvement in the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy, and France, for instance, where political debates are televised to aid voters to finalize their vote intentions. In the United States, radio talk shows (e.g., the Syndicated Tom Joyner Morning Show) were particularly influential in increasing voter participation among African Americans in the 2000 elections. A DFID report on the organization's supported project to the Malawian Development Broadcasting unit (DBU) to produce participatory radio programmes to generate dialogue about development activities, shows how the programmes motivated poor people in that country to voice their needs and concerns that went to influence government policy and service provision. As an impact, ABU helped solve many village level issues such as entitlements from government, transparency, HIV-AIDS, and improving the delivery of a wide range of government services (DFID, 2008).

The research-based argument by Amartya Sen, the Noble Prize winning economist that no substantial famine has ever occurred in a democratic country with a free press, is a classic example of the power of the agenda-setting function of the media. His claim was based on his famine research in India where in 1943 the state of

Bengal witnessed a famine that had remained unknown to the British colonial government until it was revealed by Ian Stephens, the courageous editor of the Statesman of Calcutta. The revelation ultimately led to public relief arrangements to end the famine, by which time it had killed millions of people (Sen, 2004). In addition, a 2002 study in India (cited in DFID, 2008) found a strong, significant and positive correlation between newspaper circulation levels and government responsiveness: a one per cent increase in newspaper circulation resulted in a 2.4 increase public food distribution and a 5.5 per cent increase in calamity relief expenditures. From this example, it can be argued that states with higher levels of media development are more active in protecting vulnerable citizens.

3.3. EMPIRICAL EXAMPLES ON COMMUNITY RADIO'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE

It is however important to reiterate the point made in the Chapter One that most of the studies on CR and local governance have been anecdotal and lack the rigor associated with systematic studies undertaken by my study. Nevertheless, there are an increasing number of case studies on CR and local governance in countries across the world. Some of these have been presented in the foregoing:

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on how a CR station in Northern Tanzania, Ilaramatak Radio, serving the semi-nomadic and politically marginalized Masai has empowered the people to demand accountability from their elected and traditional leaders. Local politicians were routinely invited to radio programmes to field telephone calls from an active listening audience. In one case, boisterous community discussions on the airwaves led to the removal of an under-performing representative from a local council. In another one, the community was able to organize itself to successfully protest against a national programme designed to lease traditional lands to foreign commercial interest, a victory that would have been impossible without a CR station to have been both spread the news of the pending land transactions and to serve as a vehicle to effectively voice their disapproval (FAO, 2014).

Naaikuur and Diedong (2014) have reported on a number of such studies in their paper: Core Dimensions of Community Radio at Work. Citing Shama (2011), they recount how a CR station in Zambia made it possible for ordinary people to have powers to summon their leaders and make them accountable for the use of public resources. This has instilled accountability and transparency as a basis of sustainable development since ordinary people can make their leaders do what they want and according to their priorities. The article refers to a report by Orengo and Harford (2013) to show that through a project dubbed Village Voices for Development (VVD), which aimed at using radio to promote good governance in Madagascar, the voices of ordinary villagers have been strengthened through radio programmes in which they participate in regional and village debates with decision makers, thereby making local authorities more responsive to their development needs and more accountable for local services.

In addition, a World Bank on report on social accountability, a CR station, Karnataka in India in collaboration with a CR dedicated a radio show to educating marginalized citizens on their rights and responsibilities as a means empowering them to demand responsiveness from the local government in the provision of a wide range of services (World Bank, 2005).

In a survey on CR in Ghana, Alumuku (2006) narrates how an environmental sanitation programme on Radio Ada in Ghana constrained the local government to act on to improve the situation. Following a series of programmes on rubbish-dumps in the markets, a bulldozer and a tipper were dispatched along with a number of labourers to work on the site.

Indeed, the global association of community broadcasters known as AMARC sums up the crucial accountability role CR can play in local governance as follows:

> Community Radio has made possible for ordinary people to have powers to summon their leaders and make them accountable for how they are using public resources. This instils accountability, transparency and good governance and strengthens societies bringing sustainable development and leaders do what people want and according to their priorities for example they can debate whether they want a school instead of a clinic or a hammer mill instead of a borehole (AMARC, 2007:41).

The above quotation is drawn from a report on a global assessment that explored ways of increasing the effectiveness of CR in achieving good governance, democracy, among other objectives. The report titled, *Community Radio Social Impact Assessment Removing Barriers in Increasing Effectiveness: Challenges, Findings, Reflections*, used participatory action-research processes involving 927 CR stakeholders of 96 countries to capture experiences across the world to showcase empowerment of local communities for demanding accountability from local authorities. Anecdotal studies cited in Chapter Six further provide abounding cases of the impact of CR on local governance in countries from across the developing world.

3.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has been dedicated to clarifying what is known about the field of media and governance in the context of development the overall goal being the identification of literature that will serve as the platform for identifying the gaps that my study seeks to fill. To achieve this, the normative functions of the media in governance have been identified as serving as watchdog in exposing government corruption and wrongdoings; a civic-forum for promoting public debate on development and governance issues aimed to impact policy; and agenda setter to highlight pressing social issues and to pressure government for rapid response. Attention has, however, been drawn to certain key conditions under which the media can effectively play its governance role to include media liberalism that allow the diversity of media types, freedom of information that enhances easy access to public

information, well trained journalists that will uphold high ethical and journalistic standards and a vibrant civil society to partner the media.

As a thrust of the chapter, empirical evidence on the impact of the media's governance functions have been presented, citing different cases across the developing world. The chapter ends with anecdotal case studies on CR stations on local governance.

CHAPETR 4. COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter One underscored the central purpose of communication in governance for development as the empowerment of citizens that accords ordinary people a centre-stage in development and governance processes for the betterment of their living conditions. This centralization of the importance of communication in the governance and development equation, it was pointed out, came about as a result of theoretical changes that involved movement from centralized development and governance. The common features of centralized governance included the marginalization of the people in developing countries and a non-recognition of not only their rights to participation, but also to demand accountability and responsiveness.

To underscore the forgoing, this chapter seeks to undertake a historical overview of the literature on the main theories of development communication- modernization, dependency and participation. The major points of departure between the Modernization approaches (also known as the diffusion of innovations) and the Participatory ones (also known as the Multiplicity Paradigm) will be pointed out. The ultimate goal is to provide a theoretical anchor for CR.

4.1. CENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE AND TOP-DOWN DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION IN THE MODERNIZATION THEORY

The earliest approach to development in the developing countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa, spearheaded by the United States of America (USA) and Western European countries, was embedded in what is known as the modernization theory (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Richards, Thomas & Nain, 2001; Servaes, 1989; 2005; 2009). Development was modernization of the poor societies in the "South", which was to come from the "North" – Europe and North America. Modernization was considered approximate to Westernization and simply meant "modernizing" the "backward "or "primitive" societies of the developing countries to put them at the levels and standards of scientific, technological and socio-economic levels of the Euro-American societies. Modernization called on the populations of the "underdeveloped" societies to acquire the ideas of development for "modernization" as a prerequisite for development. It was more than implied that the ideas for development could only come from sources external to the community targeted for development projects.

Two of the leading scholars on communication and development, Roger and Shoemaker, defined development as:

> a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes and higher levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971:11).

A key feature of modernization was a state-command system with a high degree of state intervention in the macro-economic planning in the developing countries, which resulted in the launching of five-year plans. In this top-down approach to development, planning was centralized and was the preserve of central government technocrats in the developing countries who were trained in the developed world. Bilateral and multinational organizations spearheaded such planning for several countries to bring about development progress (Bame, 2005; White, 2009). The identification of problems and solutions were offered at higher levels of government. Local people and communities only received information and other inputs channelled down to them and no consideration was given to specific local contexts, or the relevance of the knowledge of local people on their development situation. These approaches simply ignored local level approaches or autonomous development. The knowledge of indigenous peoples was considered too inferior to be valued because the people were considered steeped in superstition and lacked scientific knowledge. Indeed, the traditions, customs and beliefs of the people in the developing world were seen as barriers that hindered their acceptance of modernization, and needed to be replaced with modern ones.

Modernization approach to development was primarily economic. Development was defined in quantitative terms such as gross national product (GNP) and per capita income (PCI). Theories and concepts that recapitulated the development of Western Europe and North American nations were used to generate the models of development for the developing world. Industrialization was considered the surest route to economic development, alongside education and urbanization. At least that was the means by which North America and West Europe developed in the 19th century. Developing countries were encouraged to invest in programmes of industrialization such as hydroelectric projects, steel industries, and a diversity of manufacturing units.

Furthermore, modernization placed emphasis on infusions of money and technology from the developed world to the developing world and left the decisions for the development in the hands of local elites and the masters of the global economy (White, 2009). As Mefalopulos (2003) puts it, with the offer of massive assistance, underdeveloped countries were only to be blamed for their conditions; if they wanted to bridge the gap that divided them from the developed ones they would have to take advantage of the assistance offered by the richer countries and try to follow in their footsteps.

4.1.1. A CRITIQUE OF THE MODERNIZATION THEORY

In the 1970's there was a general recognition that the modernization and strong centralized state models of development were not only ineffective in promoting

development but were causing enormous injustices and violation of human rights in the world. Nearly all the scholars on development communication cited earlier have criticized modernization for its narrow view of development saying that it over-concentrated on economic growth at the expense of other important considerations. One of these neglects was the apparent relegation of democracy and governance issues to the background. For instance modernization believed that economic growth, education and urbanization supported by communication, would together help produce democratic government, an outcome that Lerner saw coming only much later in the development process. However, as has come to stay in modern times, and as scholars such as Hyden et al. (2002) and Okigbo and Eribo (2004) believe, development goes beyond just economic growth, and involves giving attention to a myriad of social- cultural and political issues to ensure the optimization of development factors. It can therefore be contended that the neglect of governance considerations by modernization contributed significantly to its failure since it paid little attention to the establishment and maintenance of institutions and the propagation of appropriate public policies.

Intricately linked to the lack of attention to governance was the centralized systems of development, which excluded citizen participation in the design and implementation of policies and programmes. Left to local elites from the capital cities that were guided and directed by foreign specialists, many development programmes failed to achieve their objectives largely due to a lack of a sense of ownership. At best, local peoples in the developing countries reacted passively to, or at worst, rejected many development interventions. A notable example was in the areas of agriculture and family planning programmes (Waisbord, 2001). White (2009:1-43) notes that, as the agricultural systems tried to replicate the agricultural models in Europe and America with the transfer of technology from the developed to the developing countries to help raise productivity, agricultural experts decided on what farmers were to produce. The decisions were then imposed on the bewildered farmers with little knowledge of the real conditions of agriculture in the context. The knowledge and preferences of the farmers themselves were rarely considered. Moreover, the extension model ignored the basic fact of context differentials. For instance, as White (2009) argues, it was not considered that in Europe and America, institutions to provide credit, transportation and marketing systems were developed to support the agricultural systems, whereas the colonial countries had not developed these systems in the colonies.

The Brazilian educationist and philosopher, Paolo Freire whose ideas formed what is termed liberation perspectives on modernization is one of the notable critics of development programmes especially those on agriculture. Freire (1972) questioned the value judgment by early development theorists who viewed agricultural practices in the developing countries as being backward and obstacles to development based on which they sought to persuade people to adopt new ideas and practices. He argued that in persuading people to accept the benefits of adopting certain innovations without thinking how such practices fit existing cultures amounted to the domestication of people.

The failure of these programmes, amongst many others, in spite of the massive injections of financial and other capital from the West suggests scholars that much of the funding that was channelled into the developing countries never reached the intended beneficiaries but was embezzled by the local elites. This implies further that the state-controlled economies of the developing countries promoted corruption, a situation that was made possible largely because the allocation of the national resources was centralized in the hands of the people who controlled the government machinery. As Gumucio-Dagron (2001) lamented, if the simple idea of involving beneficiaries in development projects had come to the minds of international donors, their development efforts would have impacted significantly the lives of the people in the developing countries.

It is for these reasons that one can agree with scholars such as White (2009) who argue that modernization sowed the seeds of bad governance in the developing countries as it created authoritarian systems with one-party governments in the post-colonial countries. This is because the movements of independence from European-based empires meant the creation of the state on the foundations on the colonial government. This gave the Europeanized colonial elites enormous power and reinforced existing systems of class, caste, racial discrimination and oppression of a peasantry. Furthermore, studies of the process of development in post-colonial countries (see Okigbo & Eribo, 2004, for example) suggest that this concentration of power was what led to chronic political instability in many parts of the post-colonial world, where virtually every country of Latin America and Africa had had a major civil war and the level of poverty-based crime became high everywhere. The argument goes further that, worst of all, this has led to the extremely unbalanced pattern of development with the masses never really moving out of a chronic state of poverty because the governing elites tended to make decisions and allocate development resources to favour their welfare and exclude the masses of rural and urban poor.

These state of affairs proved wrong development theorists that had long accepted the argument of the governing elites of Africa that the rural and urban poor were unable to govern themselves and that only the educated elites were capable of governing. Oluwu and Wusch (2004) observe that this argument was shown to be false by the total mess of development and governance that was clearly created by the governing elites themselves, especially the evidence of the political "crisis" of the 1980. It became evident that the governance of the elites was inefficient, mismanaged, corrupt, and wasteful and was not leading anywhere but to their own enrichment.

4.1.2. THE COMMUNICATION ANGLE OF MODERNIZATION

Scholars including Hyden et al. (2002) have noted that communication received considerable attention in national development in the heydays of modernization thinking in the later 1950s and early 1960s. But the ideas and concepts of development underpinned their corresponding communication approaches. In other words, the socio-economic development paradigm in turn produced its communication paradigm.

Modernization theorists suggested that cultural and information deficits lay beneath the development problems of the developing nations and believed that communication would provide vital information for solving the problems of development (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Richards, Thomas & Nain, 2001; Servaes, 1989; 2005; 2009).

Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Shramm (1967) had theorized communication as the transmission of information, taking a linear, unidirectional process in which senders send information through channels to receivers. Consequently, development communication was equated with the massive introduction of media technologies with the belief that if the people in the developing countries were exposed to mass media, they would embrace modern attitudes, ideas and practices.

The emphasis was put on media-centred persuasion activities that could improve literacy, which would, in turn, allow populations to break free from their traditionalism (Waisbord, 2011). The general assumption among development scholars, policymakers, scientists and agencies was that mass media were both agents of change and indices of development. That was why in 1961, the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that every country was to provide for its citizens media access targets of: 100 copies of newspapers, 50 radio receivers, 20 TV sets, and 20 cinema seat, per every 10, 000 inhabitants (Waisbord, 2011). The modern media (of communication) were to be harnessed to intervene directly in development activities to achieve the goals of "modernization" or development. They were to be used in one-way and top-down communication models by leaders to disseminate information of the ideas on modernization with the belief that they had powerful and direct influence on individuals.

The mass media were considered magic multipliers of development or modernization. Daniel Lerner most articulated this belief in communication than anyone else. In his famous book, The Passing of Traditional Society (Lerner, 1958), he contrasted sharply with Edward Banfield's study of "amoral familism" in Montegrano in southern Italy, which concentrated on the parochialism of local communities because of the absence of modernizing forces. The site of this study was the small village of Balgat, located some eleven miles from Ankara, the Turkish capital. Because of this vicinity, Balgat was subject to rapid social transformation. The interesting thing was that villagers did not hesitate to exchange the security and rigidity of traditional culture for the uncertainty and opportunity of the twentieth century industrial age.

Empathy, defined as "the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow's situation", was the key that set in motion the process of embracing modernity. Lerner suggested that empathy is learned from either travel to other places or encounters through the mass media.

Radio, film and television climax the revolution set in motion by Gutenberg. The mass media open to the larger masses of mankind the infinite vicarious universe. Many more millions of persons in the world were affected directly and perhaps more

profoundly, by the communication media than by the transportation agencies (Lerner, 1958).

That was how mass media became an important link in modernization, replacing personal experience as a fond of new ideas. These media, however, would only grow if supported by a critical mass of people. That was why Lener saw urbanization and literacy as other prerequisites of modernization.

4.1.3. A CRITIQUE OF COMMUNICATION UNDER MODERNIZATION

The role of communication in the modernization theory appeared fraught with deficiencies similar to those of the development aspect and so suffered serious setbacks. Melkote and Steeves (2001) in their book Communication for Development in the Third World: Theory and Practice for Empowerment, present perhaps one of the best summaries of these challenges. Drawing on several sources, especially from Latin America and Asia (Beltran, 1976; Eapen, 1974; Shore, 1980; McAnany, 1980; Masani 2001), the authors indicate the key weakness of communication as ranging from ownership to influence of political ideologies of the West.

The media in every nation were owned and controlled by urban elites, who, apart from using them in an attempt to modernize the populations, also served their economic and political interests. For a related purpose, media content was tailored towards the needs and tastes of urban people, making them highly irrelevant to rural populations.

Furthermore, little time and space was accorded to developmental information in the mass media; information relevant to development was given less preference than trivial and non-development-oriented subjects. For example, even though countries like India actively promoted pro-development content in their mass media, the programmes were marginalized in terms of the limited time accorded them for each medium. Although the broadcasting authority in India was committed to rural development and carried radio programmes that were clearly pro-development, the total percentage of such programmes was very low. Melkote and Steeves (2001) note that in "home-service" radio programmes, only 5.8 per cent of total broadcast time was devoted to rural programmes, while 40 per cent of broadcast time was claimed by music and 24.8 per cent by news. Thus, there was the anomaly of rural programmes being pro-development but the total time accorded to such programmes being rather insignificant

In addition, communication strategies often assumed media literacy with pro-literacy bias of media content. For instance, as larger numbers of the populations in the developing nations were illiterate, only programming in regional languages or major dialects, could have benefitted them, but there was an absence of such programming. Thus, as Melkote and Steeves (2001) assert, the pro-literacy bias functioned as a major constraint to diffusion of information to preliterate audiences to the disadvantage of the bulk of illiterate audiences in rural areas.

Of most direct relevance to my study is the criticism that communication and the media under modernization lacked focus on democracy and good governance. Key works on media and governance such as those by Hyden et al. (2002) and Nyamnjo (2004), note that the prevailing feature in many countries was state control of the media and an absence of independent media under both the colonial and the post-independence era. Consequently, there was more or less official dictation of editorial policy, and intolerance to dissenting opinion. The state-owned media (mostly newspapers and radio) were concentrating on nation building and preserving the interests of the colonial masters (Hyden et al., 2002). In Ghana, for example, when radio broadcasting entered the colonies as an agency of the colonial state to extend to the colonies the imperial communication and propaganda, in the first decade of establishment, it was to play a central role in mobilizing colonial subjects to participate in and support the second world war (Ghartey-Tagoe, 2010).

In the post-independent era, the media in Africa in particular, were controlled by political parties and their major role was to praise and celebrate the work of the parties (White, 2009:1-43). In Ghana, Karikari (2014) reports that the press under one-party or military systems of government played virtually no important role in advancing democratic ideas or projects. The authoritarian media, serving as state institutions, were there to only promote strongly the state's national development policies and programmes and propagate effectively its international relations activities. Therefore, the ability of the media to contribute to democracy and governance was severely constrained as for example, criticism of the bad services and the underlying lack of accountability of government to the people was simply not be allowed.

4.2. THE DEPENDENCY THEORY

By the 1970s, it was clear that the promises of modernization to bring about economic and social developments of the developing countries were on a steep path to failure. The Modernization/Diffusion theories, therefore, unsurprisingly met a storm of opposition in the former colonies of Latin America, Asia and Africa (see Servaes & Malikhao, 2008; Servaes, 2004 for example).

The criticisms were based on what came to be known as the dependency theory. Born in Latin America, and informed by Marxist and Critical theories, the main concern of the dependency theory was that there was a continued imperialist dependency between the new independent nations and the colonial masters, after the end of the colonial period. The dependency relationship recreated a global system of unequal distribution of resources that facilitated economic exploitation of the former colonies by their colonial masters. At a practical level for example, it simply meant the system was to ensure that the developing countries remained mere exporters of traditional agricultural and mineral products to the developed world (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008; Servaes, 2004). The *dependistas* saw this as the major cause of the chronic backwardness of the developing countries, since the chief interest of the Western monopoly capitalism was to prevent, or, if that was impossible, to slow down and to control the economic development of underdeveloped countries.

Modernization theory held that the problems of underdevelopment in the developing countries were internal but the *dependentas* disagreed with this and argued that they were determined by external factors and the way former colonies were integrated into the world economy. In other words, the result of the underdevelopment of the 'poor 'countries was the development of the rich western countries (Waisbord, 2003). Honik (1988) saw this as implying that the problems of the Underdeveloped World were political rather than the result of lack of information. But Inglehart and Welzel (2009) observe that the shifting of the blame for the problems of the developing countries to external factors was welcomed by the local elites, since it implied that poverty had nothing to do with internal problems or the corruption of local leaders; it was the fault of global capitalism. This was unsurprising as this thinking could be a source of psychological relief for guilt the elites felt for the mismanagement of the resources channelled into the developing countries from the developed world.

Honik, cited above, however recognized that there were internal factors that worsened the plight of the developing world and made it difficult for the adoption of new attitudes and behaviours. These internal constraints, included lack of infrastructure, credit facilities and poor health care services.

Some of the criticisms of modernization have been directed towards the role of communication in development. For instance, the dependency school of thought argued that in singling out the mass media as having a central role in introducing innovations, modernization theories ignored the issue of media ownership and control (Waisbord, 2001). The validity of this criticism finds ample support in the media ownership and control that was in foreign and powerful interests who, as seen in the immediate section of the chapter, used them to pursue their agendas other than championing development goals.

The dependency theory, therefore, called for a revolution in the economic relationship between the developing and developed countries. These new nations shared the ideas of being interdependent from the superpowers and moved to form the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The NAM defined development as a political struggle (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008) with a call on Third World nations to escape from global exploitation only by withdrawing from global markets and adopting import-substitution policies as posited by Modernization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009). Instead there was to be increased trade among the NAM member nations after disassociating from the world market (Servaes, 2004).

Virtually all the sources cited above observe that the dependency paradigm played an important role in the movement for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) from the 1960s to the 1980s. At that time, the new states in Africa, Asia and the success of socialist and popular movements in Cuba, China, Chile and other countries provided the goals for political, economic and cultural self-determination within the international community of nations. UNESCO sponsored debates during the period of 1960's and 1970's entitled 'New World Information Order'. Servaes and Malikhao (2008) note that, within the framework of the NWICO, it was proposed that member countries design national

communication policies in their countries that would, among other things, put ownership of media structures in the governments of member countries and oppose domestic and foreign elites as well as business interests.

It must be noted that the realization of the economic aspect of NAM proved to be a tough sell for many of the member nations because many of the countries lacked adequate economic infrastructure to sustain their independence from the world market. Sevaes (2004) suggests that, especially for most African countries, their economies were too weak that they badly needed money from the export of their raw materials to the rich Western countries to survive. Cutting ties with the West would therefore amount to economic suicide. Besides, the fact that many countries still largely depend on export business with the West, gives further support to the unrealistic nature of the NAM export-substitution proposal.

4.3.1. PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Over the last thirty years the field of development communication theory has gradually switched from an emphasis on the colonial, modernization and state-command model to a participatory model. Virtually all the scholars on development communication cited earlier under this chapter agree that the modernization/diffusion approaches failed to impact positively the development situation in the developing world due largely to their top-down, ethnocentric and paternalistic view of development. As a result, development organizations, practitioners and academicians called for a review of development and development communication.

Mefalopulos (2008) notes that unlike the proponents of the modernization and dependency worldviews, those of the participatory approaches have avoided proposing a "grand theory" to provide a universal analysis and interpretation of the world. Instead, the conception of participatory development and communication seem to have aimed largely at addressing the weaknesses of the earlier development theories. The validity of this assertion is evident in the analysis of the core features of the participatory development model captured in key scholarly works on the field.

Scholars such as Servaes (2004; 2008), Mefalopulos (2008), Huesca (2008), Melkote and Steeves (2001) agree that the central thesis of participatory development is the rejection of the linear, one-dimensional and universalist view of development espoused by the modernization model. Servaes in particular emphasises the multiplicity of variations of social development, in part, to counter the view that all nations and cultures must follow the European or Western process of social development. Given the vastly different social, cultural and historical conditions around the globe, Servaes argues, development processes should be generated from each context. Thus development in the new paradigm is conceived, to use the words of Huesca (2008), in terms of "diversity and pluralism. This suggests that nations and regions cultivate their own, responsive approaches to self-determined development goals that emerge out of participatory approaches" (Huesca, 2008:188).

Servaes summarizes the key characteristics of the participatory/multiplicity model of development as follows:

> "1. The participatory model sees people as the controlling actors or participants for development. People will have self-appreciation instead of self-depreciation. Development is meant to liberate and emancipate people. Local culture is respected.
>
> 2. The participatory model sees people as the nucleus of development. Development means lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment. Development aims to educate and stimulate people to be active in self and communal improvements while maintaining a balanced ecology. ...
>
> 3. The participatory model emphasizes on the local community rather than the nation-state, or monistic universalism, on dialogue rather than monologue, and on emancipation rather than alienation.
>
> 4. Participation involves the redistribution of power. Participation aims at redistributing the elites' power so that a community can become a full-fledged democratic one. As such it directly threatens those whose position and/or every existence depends upon power and its exercise over others" (Servaes, 2008:202).

The central point Servaes and the other body of other participatory development literature are underscoring is the localization of development as opposed to macro-level approaches. The newer models emphasize community-level strategies where local communities in developing countries will be central change agents pursuing development goals on their terms rather than being directed by external agents. By this, development will be consistent with, and appreciative of local cultural values as well as knowledge of contexts and circumstances.

Furthermore, development is to respond to the basic needs of the people, which involve examining development problems from "bottom-up" by prioritizing the voices and concerns of the poorest and marginalized populations in the decision-making processes. This can come about through involving the people in a process of information and knowledge sharing to build trust, commitment, mutual understanding, and right attitudes as a basis for sustainable development.

Following from the above, a close theoretical and conceptual relationship between decentralized local governance and the participatory development paradigm has been established. This topic is taken up further under the next chapter, but it has to be noted at this point that the on-set of participatory development was a major driving force of the movement to decentralize governance in the 1990s. A central view held by scholars (see Rao & Mansuri, 2013) is that, since participatory development favoured localization, decentralization would incorporate all vital publics in development planning and implementation and engender accountable and responsive governance.

4.3.2. CRITIQUE OF PARTICIPATORY THEORY

Participatory development embodies propositions that present optimism in addressing more effectively the problems of development in the developing countries. If successfully applied in real development contexts, the approaches can induce real empowerment of the rural and urban poor towards improvements in their living conditions such as agricultural productivity, education and health services as well as making the vast pool of the unemployed youth more productive. White terms this "the process of giving the masses of the poor the social, economic, political and psychological power over these areas of their lives so that they can get resources to realize their hopes, initiatives and endeavours" (White, 2009).

The models, however, do not lack criticisms. Researchers have identified flawed theoretical assumptions about the power of participatory development (see Rao & Mansuri, 2013; Waisbord, 2001). For instance, Waisbord (2002) argues against the seeming presentation of participation as a fit-for-all-situations approach to addressing problems in the developing countries. In the view of the author, since at the heart of participation in development is the mobilization of grassroots people in the identification of problems and possible solutions, the proponents of this view have taken into little account the fact that different problems and contexts would require approaches other than participatory ones. Waisbod's argument can be supported with an example on disease epidemic situations. A top-down national, international, regional or district level intervention could be the most pragmatic response to containing an outbreak of a contagious and fast spreading disease that needs attitudinal change, rather than participatory processes. Participatory approaches would be appropriate in designing strategies that can lead to long-term behaviour changes that can prevent such outbreaks in the future.

Rao and Mansuri (2012) point out that the supposition that all societies (democratic and non-democratic) can be receptive to participatory approaches is flawed. Based on studies and practical experiences on participatory development, the authors find, for instance, that people who lived in non-democratic societies were usually wary to participate out of fear or retaliation. Waisbord (2001) adds that in such cases, it would take persuasion and manipulation to get the people to participate into decision-making, a situation he saw as a violation of local autonomy that did not allow local people who might not be interested in taking an active role to do so. Continuing Rao and Mansuri cited above, identify what they termed unequal power structures in developing countries that constrained democratic decision-making. Based on analysis of situations in many contexts, these experts observed how endemic power inequalities tended to favour elites at the expense of the marginalized. For example, in their multi-country study report for the World Bank, Localizing Development: Does it Work? Rao and Mansuri (2012) found that participants in civic activities tended to be wealthier, more educated, of higher social status, male and more politically connected than non-participants.

Because of the foregoing challenges development has largely remained top-down. When it comes to policy, there may be some rhetoric regarding participation, but in

fact, the policies may still be the product of the elites. A typical context to situate this argument within is decentralized local governance. As seen in Ghana's case in chapters one and two, in comparison with theoretical suppositions espoused in subsequent chapters, although local governance has been presented as a viable alternative to centralized governance in creating avenues for citizen participation in development, decision-making processes have been dominated largely in the hands of the elite. That explains why development programmes have remained largely irresponsive to the felt needs of citizens in many developing countries, and with poverty rather deepening in Africa particularly in Africa.

4.3.3. PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

The participatory communication model has been proposed as an alternative to the one-way flow of information in the persuasive approach to communication in the diffusion model. This model holds approaches that have come to be known as participatory communication; hence, all subsequent references to communication in the discourse on participatory development will use the term, participatory communication.

Participatory communication incorporates "approaches aimed to empower the community towards collective decision-making and action through enhanced knowledge and skills to identify, prioritize and solve problems and needs" (Haider et al., 2011:9). Ramirez says this kind of communication "... is focused on the sharing of knowledge and insight about the process of enabling disadvantaged groups to increase control over their own lives and environment" (Ramirez, 1999:81). More recent scholars who have broadened the conceptualization to articulate more clearly the theme of governance include Wilkins et al. (2014) who draw on Rodriguez (2001) and Downing (2010), respectively, to argue that it is a "a strong activist driven use of communication for the purposes of social mobilization and political transformation" and "more specific media focused uses of communication advocating social and political change" (Wilkins et al., 2014:1).

The essential elements of participatory communication are unpacked in the following discussions. It is a human-entered rather than the technology or media-centeredness in the diffusion model with a central role to facilitate dialogue, participation and empowerment of people in development processes. Furthermore, participatory communication ought to be a process of meaning exchange, aimed to build consensus and resistance, historically grounded, culturally sensitive and multifaceted, with attention to all the political, economic and ideological structures and processes that comprise society. Essentially this conceptualization of communication has shifted focus from the information dissemination to audiences as in the persuasion approaches in the diffusion model to a response to information needs in context relevance.

The most pertinent point in the participatory communication paradigm relates to its relevance to the discourse on the role of the media in governance in the context of development. By shedding fresh light on communication as empowerment of

citizens, the new thinking underlies the change in the role of the media in governance as espoused in this study. For instance, as Hyden et al. (2002) observe, news flow in the name of attuning news to national priorities in the past, has changed to an interactive approach that facilitates a discursive process that can be locally programmed and managed as well as attuned to meeting specific local demands.

Furthermore, the recognition of communication as a stimulant of empowerment has led to the decentralization of media systems in many countries across the world from the 1990s (2004; 2008). In the views of Huesca (2008), this kind of media system has contributed to addressing the imbalances in communication resources in developing countries created by colonial and post-colonial systems, which went to favour local elites in terms of ownership and content and to the detriment of the public. Therefore, the collective-ownership and policy-making, self-management, participation in planning, decision-making and production orientations of community media discussed under the next chapter, can be said to be direct derivations from the above reconceptualization of communication (Bosch, 2014).

However, communication is conceptualized in this study to go beyond the modern mass media. Grassroots structures, which are based on interpersonal, group and oral tradition-based systems as well as low-scale, people-owned modern communication systems like CR and participatory video are included in the new paradigm. These communication systems can provide opportunities for real dialogue on common problems identification and solutions as well as reflections upon community issues (Melkote & Steeves, 2002; Waisbord, 2001; White, 2008).

The recognition of the potential of grassroots, bottom-up communication approaches has given rise to numerous community-based communication projects in many developing countries across the globe. For example, Gumucio-Dagron in a survey report for the Rockefeller foundation, Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication provides brief descriptions of "case stories" of participatory communication for social change experiences in countries across Latin America, Asia and Africa. Although most of them were CR stations, the projects included community theatre, video, audio towers, television, village phones and village knowledge centres. Reading Gumucio-Dagron's report, one finds how people living in poor communities have been empowered by these projects to seize control of their own stories and begun to change their circumstances of poverty and exclusion (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001).

The oral traditional communication forms consist of what is generally termed traditional or folk media, which Franz-Josef Eilers (2002) defines as referring to all communicative possibilities existing and inherited in a given culture can be found in Latin America, Asia and Africa. In Africa, they constitute a dominant feature in the communication of indigenous communities in the form of theatre, ballads, mime, puppetry, storytelling, folk songs, folk dances (Bame, 2005; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). It is important to note, however, that such traditional media forms were to be eschewed in the modernization paradigm because as they were remotely connected to the local culture, they were seen as an extension of the people's culture and stood

in the way of modernization (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). But this attitude proved to be one of the main factors that made development communication ineffective in Africa in particular. For instance, Ansu-Kyeremeh (2001) studied Ghana government's adult education and extension programmes in health and education targeting rural populations during in the immediate post-independence and found minimal achievements because the communication strategies used undervalued the indigenous communication systems, which have roots in the Ghanaian culture. Justifiably, therefore, many of the founders of communication research in Africa are calling for radical departure from the modernization based approaches to development communication in Africa to the adoption of indigenous communication systems of the continent (Ansu-kyeremeh, 1997; Moemeka, 1998; Ogboaja, 1985; 2005).

Interestingly, the "non-conventional" communication processes are finding their way into the governance literature at both the national and local levels. For instance, Hyden et al. (2002) report on the use of theatrical performances in civic education programmes in some countries where they have been helpful in getting messages about gender equality across to communities where cultural change might prove virtually impossible. In Ghana, the use of folk songs and poetry are being adopted by politicians for spreading their campaign messages to rural populations. Although no study has been conducted on their efficacy, there seems to be an increasing use of these forms of communication for political purposes.

In addition, as stated in Chapter One, various communication strategies and methodologies were adopted to improve local governance in some countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Most of the innovative use of communication involved adaptions of communication channels other than the mass media (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999; White, 2008). Apart from the Municipality of Karnata in Mexico that pioneered the use of radio as an awareness building tool, Bangladesh and India used popular theatre for similar purposes. In India village meetings were used as the most basic unit of direct democracy; and in Zimbabwe, education materials on citizenship and democracy were developed and used widely across the country. Oluwu and Wunsch (2010) add that one of the reasons why Botswana has the reputation of having one of the best local governments in Africa is because there are frequent forums in which councillors take part in public deliberations about community needs. The atmosphere of freedom in such communities allows for debate even between opposition political parties at the local level.

An added advantage in the use of grassroots communication systems is the possibility to integrate the traditional media systems discussed earlier with the modern means of communication in such a way that the potentials of both can be maximized for relevant and effective communication within the socio-cultural context (Bame, 2005). According to Bame, one approach could be to use the modern communication technologies to reflect and promote indigenous cultures and traditions. In more practical terms, for example, socio-drama is a highly participatory communication genre popularly used in traditional communities in Ghana for entertainment but also for education. It can be integrated with radio to

highlight the problems of bad services and other development problems. This can involve inviting people from various sections of a district to spontaneously dramatize the problems that can be recorded and broadcast on the radio. On the day of the presentation to the communities, the mobile team of the station goes out to record it with comments and the significance of this drama for their community. During the broadcast, comments from other communities are invited and broadcast. This method will have an extra appeal in communicating issues for social change because it contains elements of multi-media as it combines radio with interpersonal and group interactions techniques. In Ghana, examples of such integrations include the broadcasts of indigenous drama on television and radio on a wide range of issues, programmes that have proved to be extremely popular.

4.3.4. THE INFLUENCE OF PAOLO FREIRE ON PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

Participatory communication owes a great deal of its ideas, principles and methodologies to Paulo Freire for his influence on participatory development. Freire's work was in adult education, which he started in Brazil in the 1970s with the broad aim to address the socio-economic and political imbalances in the Brazilian society.

Freire spelt out his ideas on education in his seminal books on liberation pedagogy (1979) and his critique on extension work (1973). Freire criticized the prevailing education system in Latin America, which he referred to as the banking system. He called it the banking system because the student was assumed to be an empty vessel into which the all-knowing teacher deposited knowledge. He proposed a system of education that would be a means of liberating people from oppression and injustice. According to Freire, "Education aims at liberation, the radical transformation of reality, to improve it, to make it more human, to allow men and women to be reconciled as subjects of their own history, and not as objectives" (Freire, 1999: viii).

Education as freedom should be based on a teaching relationship that was not a transmission of contents only on the part of the educator, but one that would provide an opportunity for the teacher and the student to share knowledge and lean from one another (Freire, 1999). Freire further explained, "no one can be considered definitively educated or trained. Each one, in his or her way, together with others, can learn and discover new dimensions and possibilities about realities in life" (Freire, 1999: viii).

Freire's liberation communication conceived communication as "dialogue", "conscientization", "awareness", "praxis" and "empowerment". The central goal of communication should be to conscientize people about the realities of their living conditions and to provide avenues for grassroots communities to interact among themselves in order to define their community problems and find solutions for such problems. Freire called this free dialogue that prioritized cultural identity, trust and commitment. His approach has been called "dialogical pedagogy", which defined equity in distribution and active grassroots participation as central principles.

Communication should provide a sense of ownership to participants through sharing and reconstruction of experiences.

Freire's ideas ran against fundamental principles in the diffusion model, namely the sender-focus and behavioural bias that it inherited from persuasion models in the U.S. He diagnosed the problems of in the developing world as problems of communication, not information as persuasion theories proposed. Solutions, then, needed to have an understanding of communication that was not limited to the application of Western ideas. The notion of group, interpersonal, community and small-scale media discussed above drew from Freire.

Almost all writers (see for example Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Waisbord, 2001; Richards, 2001; Obregon, 2014) draw on Freire's conception of communication to espouse their ideas on participatory communication. An example is Richard's book, Communication and Development: The Freirean Connection (2001) in which the contributors in the various chapters connect the thoughts of Freiere to their perspectives of participatory communication. The introductory chapter by Richards, The Freirean Legacy, Development Communication and Pedagogy can be said to contain a succinct summary of Freire's inspiration as the author connects his ideas in to the concepts of dialogue, participation, awareness and praxis as in Freire's conception of communication. The work by Thomas Tufte and Paolo Mefalopulos, Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide (2009) is another classical work that is contextualized in Freire's approach to communication.

CR as underlined as a leading tool in the media's role in participatory communication is widely known to be anchored on theoretical assumptions of Paolo Freire. The core principles of communal-ownership, democratic management, access and participation, as well as its orientation towards the poor and the marginalized, noted earlier in this chapter, clearly form the nexus between CR and the principles of participatory communication. As such, scholarship on CR often demonstrates the relationship between CR and Freirean communication approach (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Jallov, 2012; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Carpentier, Lie & Servaes, 2001).

The Freirean ideas in CR are central to the philosophy behind CR programming. The central thesis drawn from key works (including the above cited ones) is that the basis of community radio programming is to ensure community participation, and the building of a participatory society that brings community making. Audience participation in programming in CR means that essentially, the audience should participate in determining programme needs and preferences, in programme production, and evaluation. Through this basic principle, the people of the community must define the problems of the community and must discover the solutions to the problems, for example in the sectors of farming, health and education. Professionals are invited into programmes - agricultural extension agents, community nurses and doctors but are presented as sharing ideas and solutions with farmers and pregnant mothers. Here, CR represents an alternative from of an educational radio, not the old form of education from "experts" to supposed knowledge-less illiterate peasants. Rather, it is assumed that rural and

urban lower status people have a wealth of knowledge and problem-solving ideas that they can share among themselves and with technical experts.

The above approach means that a key to the success of CR is the competence of the managing staff who understands thoroughly the principles of CR. The small programme producing staff of CR is typically not made up of people trained in communication schools to write programmes and read them over the microphone, but people skilled in community development, training community leadership and forming community-based organizations. They are particularly skilled in leading discussion groups that get all participants to contribute ideas, listen to others in the group, build on the ideas of others and gradually lead a discussion to consensus and group action. In other words, CR staff members are especially skilled in the classic Freirean consciousness-raising methods. That is, they are specialists in getting relatively dependent, passive, poorer people at the bottom of the community who almost never speak out, to discover deep in their consciousness their own ideas and bring these ideas out in discussion and planning. They lead people to listen to each other, building on other's ideas and engaging in real dialogue. The most important competence is the ability to stimulate the creativity of the community in problem solving in almost every facet of community life.

4.3.5. CRITIQUE OF COMMUNICATION UNDER PARTICIPATORY THEORY

The role of communication in development as presented above has attracted some criticisms. Key among them relates to inherent limitations of some of the participatory communication approaches discussed earlier. Being seen as essentially empowerment of grassroots people to communicate among themselves to solve local problems and to articulate their needs to affect policies, it would seem that application of participatory approaches would not be feasible in solving some development problems that need short-term and quick solutions. Indeed, many of the African scholars including those cited earlier who espouse the potentials of indigenous or folk media forms like theatre, folk songs and story-telling to induce behavioural changes, equally recognize their limitations in this regard. For Bame (2005) in particular, the main limitation to using indigenous communication more extensively is their very labour-intensive nature. Bame explains that for example, indigenous drama can reach only one village at a time, and the number of annual performances may depend as much on the endurance of the development team as on their skills. He concludes that, although it is an effective medium, it may reach too small an audience to effect change on a massive scale. The example of epidemics cited earlier, can be used to illustrate Bame's point. Containing a cholera outbreak for example, might require timely delivery of preventive messages and for inducing behavioural changes like encouraging people to wash their hands with soap at critical times. The mass media would best spread the messages to all sectors of a society rather than interpersonal and group communication techniques such as folk media. But as noted earlier, the mass media's top-down approach limits the potential impact of the communication.

Perhaps the most critical area is the continuous concentration of mass media ownership in the hands of the economically and political powerful, which has remained pretty much the case in most developing countries. The dynamics of this situation on the media's role in governance for development is the subject for the next section of the chapter; suffice to note that the operations of the media tend to reinforce the top-down communication model in modernization. Even though CR has been identified as the alternative to the mainstream commercial and public service media presenting opportunities for participatory communication, this sector of the media in many developing country face several challenges, including regulatory ones that impede their full potentials. So, to a large extent, communication in the name of development remains largely rhetorical.

4.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This is the second chapter of the four-chapter series on review of extant literature. This chapter has two main sections. Section one reviewed the body of literature on the main theories of development communication, namely: modernization, dependency and participation. The review captured the essence of the study in creating a link (communication) between development and governance so as to underscore the need for active participation of the citizenry (in various communities) in decision and policy making processes. The review demonstrated that the top-down approach in modernization theory lacked local level approaches because marginalized citizens were ignored and not given a voice in the decision making process. By over-emphasis on infusions of money and technology from the developed world into the developing world, the decision making process was left in the hands of local elites and the masters of the global economy while the marginalized were deprived participation. Such practices, according to the review, amounted to imposition of innovations on people without considering whether it fitted their cultures or applicable to their settings, hence most of the funds and innovations never reached those in need of it, they were embezzled by the local elites.

The review identified a contradictory evidence gap in that educated elites who were thought to be capable of governing the poor and marginalized were shown to be incapable, wasteful and corrupt. Furthermore on the contradictory evidence gap, the review showed that mass media (communication) that was meant to heighten the level of development and participation by the poor and marginalized was seen to be seriously weak and inefficient. Most of these media were owned and controlled by those in power, the elites, who fuelled their corrupt practices because media content was not tailored towards the needs and aspiration of the local people and the marginalized were not given opportunity to censure the government. Hence, communication under modernization failed woefully as far as good governance was concerned because mass media were constrained in their effort to promote good governance. Instead, the media was controlled by elites or political parties to advance their ideas and practices that lacked consideration for the lowly, poor and marginalized. Another important weakness the chapter revealed in the modernization theory was the lack of adequate recognition given to governance

issues in both development and the role of communication. Considerations for democratic good governance were subordinated in the efforts to modernize the people with the assumption that these variables could automatically be gingered once economic development was promoted by the mass media. Needless to say this was one of the major flaws of modernization in the light of the current notions of governance and development discussed in the next chapter.

This chapter further revealed that, in an effort to right the wrongs of modernization theory, proponents of dependency theory came to the fore with the appeal that the bane of underdevelopment in Asia and Africa is external because the western world exploited these continents to build their empires. This implies that the problem is not internal or arising from corruption or mismanagement by local elites. The chapter, however, identified another contradictory evidence gap in relation to dependency theory because developing nations were constrained by several internal factors such as poor health services, lack of infrastructure, credit facilities and mismanagement by local elites. Moreover, communication via mass media was seen to be constrained by the powerful nations and local elites whose radio programming, for instance, were mainly designed to perpetuate their selfish agendas with little programming devoted to development issues in developing countries. These internal factors belied the claims of dependency theorists and incapacitated developing nations from breaking away from the western world culminating in perpetual underdevelopment and dependence on foreign aid.

The chapter discussed a major shift in paradigm with the introduction of participatory model of development. Unlike modernization and dependency theories, participatory theory espouses bottom-up approach, which sees people as the nucleus of development, respects local culture, emphasizes local community and uphold decentralization of power. In effect, this paradigm shift in development communication largely prioritizes the voices and concerns of the poorest and marginalized populations in the decision-making processes. This is a boost for decentralization of governance because it deters authoritarian systems and centralized development under modernization model and embraces all vital publics in development planning, implementation with ample space for censuring good governance.

It was shown in the chapter that participatory communication is human centred and linked to good local governance. Unlike modernization model, which focuses on diffusion of communication without response from the audience, participatory communication facilitates dialogue, participation and empowerment of people in development processes, they are all given a space to respond based on contextual relevance. Hence, participatory model, in conjunction with Freire's conception of communication, espouses an independent media that could spearhead citizen participation in policy debates, censure government and demand responsiveness to citizen's needs.

The chapter identified CR, by virtue of its mission, vision and orientation, as the independent media capable of empowering the poor and marginalized people at the grassroots and to be a catalyst for development. It is noteworthy that integration of

CR into the framework of participatory model caters for the several limiting factors identified in the model such as the notion that some participatory communication approaches are labour intensive and inability to reach a large audience in a short-while.

As its thrust, the chapter underlined communication as being a potential catalyst in promoting governance for development. Unlike the modernization development paradigm where communication neglected governance issues, communication in the participatory paradigm gave a central role to communication. The main role of communication is to facilitate citizen-government engagement in policy and decision-making to make development participatory, accountable and responsive. The specific functions of communication in governance for development form the subject for the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5. CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY RADIO AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Theoretical chapter discussed a major shift in paradigm with the introduction of participatory models of development and communication. Unlike Modernization, Participatory theory espouses a bottom-up approach that sees people as the nucleus of development, respects local culture, emphasizes local community, and above all, upholds decentralization of governance for development.

Development communication largely prioritizes the voices and concerns of the poorest and marginalized populations in development processes and serves as a potential catalyst in promoting governance for development. Unlike in the Modernization development paradigm where the media relegated issues of good governance to the background, the Participatory paradigm gives a central role to media in governance. The main role of the media is to facilitate citizen-government engagement in policy and decision-making to make development participatory, accountable and responsive.

CR has been identified in that chapter as the ideal medium capable of empowering the poor and marginalized people at the grassroots to participate in decision-making in governance a development. The current chapter is dedicated to clarifying the concepts of CR and good local governance as well as their related ones. These will lead to the development of a conceptual model on the relationship between the role of the media (CR) and good local governance, focusing on the indications of participation, accountability and responsiveness. It begins with CR.

5.1. COMMUNITY RADIO

CR is a key element of the broader group of media used in facilitating community communication (Karikari, 2000; Jankowski & Prehn, 2002; Carpeneter et al., 2009). It is a key ingredient of any pluralistic media ecology and provides an important space for citizen participation (Buckley, 2008).

From its beginnings in Latin America in the 1940s, CR gained popularity in Canada, Europe, Asia and Africa, becoming a global experience by the early 1990s (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001). CR has been given different names in various places across the world. Whereas in Africa and the Caribbean it is predominantly referred to as CR, in Latin America and the United States, the medium is termed alternative radio (Bosch, 2014; Buckley 2011). In Europe it is referred to as association radio, whilst in Australia, it is called ethnic or aboriginal radio. In other contexts, this broadcasting system is known as local radio, citizens' media or radical media (Bosh, 2014).

Despite its popularity, there has not been a single definition for CR. Buckley et al. (2008) explain that the difficulty has arisen mainly due to a lack of consensus on a single global model; there can be as many models of CR as there are stations. For this reason, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, 2007) avoids a universal definition but gives the task to community members, although there are many definitions in charters, statements, and manuals that are emerging (Vanzyl, 2009). This section of the chapter focuses on clarifying the concept, CR and its core characteristics.

5.1.1. CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY RADIO

To understand CR, it is helpful to first clarify the term, community. Community is a multidisciplinary concept, often used by political and social scientists, historians, philosophers, among others to refer generally groups of persons connected by ties such as kinship, geography, cultural identity or political ideology (see for example, Cohen, 1985; Tengan, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2001; Nukunya, 2003; Kröger & Meier, 2003, cited in Diedong & Naaikuur, 2015). It is not the goal here to elaborate at length debates on the formulations of community; it is to focus on the meaning of the concept as it is used in the discourse on the field of community media (CM).

In this context, community is usually given either a 'spatial' or an 'interest' connotation (Karikari, 2000; Jankowski & Prehn, 2002; Carpenter et al., 2008). According to the scholars just cited, a geographic community refers to a group of people living in the same geographical area, such as a neighbourhood, village, town, administrative or political region, district, a suburb of a city. Geographically-based communities usually constitute only part of a nation and their members may share religious beliefs, language or other common symbols, but the dominant distinguishing feature is common geographical location. As applied to CR, in many developing countries, including Ghana geographically-based stations are the dominant forms. Indeed in Ghana, most CR stations define their communities to be co-terminus with their local administrative area, the MMDAs.

In contrast with geographic communities are interest-based ones, where members share some cultural, social or political interests independent of geographic proximity. Thus interest becomes the sole basis for the existence of an "interest" community. Community of interests is often referred to as 'virtual community' or 'internet community' because its members interact mostly on the internet as opposed to the 'real community' in geographic community where members can interact on face-to-face basis.

However, this study subscribes to the conceptualizations by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) that regulates broadcasting in Canada and the Windhoek Charter on Broadcasting in Africa (WCBA)

> a radio station owned and controlled by a not for-profit organization, the structure of which provides for membership, management,

> operation and programming primarily by members of the community at large (CRTC, quoted in Buckley et al., 2008:214).
>
> and a
>
> broadcasting which is for, by and about the community and whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is non-profit (WCBA, quoted in Buckley et al., 2008:214).

The National Communication Authority (NCA), the body responsible for frequency licensing in Ghana, defines CR in very similar terms as follows:

> radio that is, about, for, by and of a specific marginalized community, whose ownership and management is representative of that community, which pursues a participatory social development agenda, and which is non-profit, non-sectarian and non-partisan.

Common key features encapsulated in the various definitions of CR are community ownership structures that reflect the marginalized communities served; participatory ethos that prioritizes the involvement of the community in key decision-making on its operations; non-profit-oriented and non-partisan programming content, as well as operation from and service to a marginalized community.

CR is better understood by comparing its key features with those of current dominant global-level broadcasting structures and models. Buckley et al. (2008) note that about twenty-five years ago national broadcasting systems could be classified according to the prevailing political systems in countries. Most European countries had a single monopoly broadcaster (public service in the West and state control in the East), the Americas had free enterprise models, and Africa and Asia were dominated by strict government ownership and control. Nowadays, however, the broadcasting world has changed utterly. Drawing from many sources (see for example, Price & Raboy, 2002; Buckley et al., 2008; Alumuku, 2007; Myers, 2008) three basic types of broadcasting systems coexist in many democratic countries. They are public service, commercial broadcasters, and community broadcasters. The key characters of each of these broadcasting systems, their potential to promote the public good and good governance, as well as their constraints as captured from across the literature, can be summarized in the foregoing.

Public service broadcasting is publicly-owned; state funded, run independently from government and economic interests, and is dedicated solely to serving the public interest. Much of the funding for the operation comes from licence fees that the listeners pay for the receivers they have in their homes. Price and Raboy (2002) capture the importance of public service broadcasting as being a tool of pluralism and diversity, an instrument of education, unification, and for building a constructive national identity as well as sustaining languages and cultures and help develop national talents in production and creativity. Best examples of public service broadcasting that maintains the principles of editorial independence and public

service objectives are found in many countries in the European Union, together with Norway, Australia and Canada, Japan, amongst others (Buckley et al., 2008). Buckley et al. (2008) point out that the BBC is perhaps the most famous public service broadcaster in the world, governed by clear status of non-profit, universality of service, unified control, and the maintenance of high programme standards. These standards hardly apply in many developing countries, where so-called public service broadcasters are too close to government.

Commercial private broadcasting provides programmes designed primarily for profit from advertising revenue and is owned and controlled by private individuals or commercial enterprise. It is thus profit-oriented and controlled by individual commercial groups, entrepreneurs or individuals. According to the sources cited above, the commercial private sector is the dominant trend in the world, driven in part by new technologies, and its growth has in many countries enhanced the range and diversity of content.
Even though the above types of broadcasting are the dominant features, direct monopoly government ownership and control continues to exist in a number of developing countries, such as Belarus, Zimbabwe, China, Turkmenistan, and Myanmar (Burma). State or government owned and controlled broadcasting refers to broadcasting stations owned and operated by government, whether at the regional or national levels. It is primarily aimed at providing citizens with information on government policy and activity (Buckley et al., 2008).

As noted in the Empirical chapter, one of the critical conditions that has implications on media ability to serve the public interests and to promote good governance is ownership. The central point is that ownership influences media content, policies and objectives (McQuail, 2010). Buckley et al. (2008) in their book Broadcasting, Voice, and Accountability, which focuses on a public interest approach to broadcasting in the context of governance and development, perhaps best captures the ownership and public interests dynamics of each of the broadcasting types. The argument goes that, where a public broadcaster is independent and has a clear mandate, it can make significant contributions to good governance and development. For instance, with practical editorial independence from government, a public broadcaster can exercise their mandate to freely hold government accountable through investigative journalism. In addition, since most public broadcasters have a national reach, they have an advantage to attract greater audiences than their commercial and community counterparts; with that, they can articulate the views and interests of all sectors and groups as well as promote broad social debate about matters of public importance. Furthermore, where public broadcasters are well funded, they can serve the public with quality informational and educational programmes.

However, public service usually comes at a price. Particularly for developing countries, the major challenge is financial (Price & Raboy, 2002; Buckley et al., 2008). Many public service broadcasters face serious funding constraints. Audience fees, levied on television or radio receiver ownership, represent a stable, independent, and often relatively rich source of funding. Where this option is not

feasible, as in many developing countries, devising other effective mechanisms is a central challenge. This state of affairs negatively influences the independence of public service broadcasters and their ability to carry out their social service mandate. Particularly, their economic dependence on government makes them susceptible to control and interferences and curtail their freedom to hold government accountable.

Commercial broadcasting can, and do play an important role in promoting the public interest through their programme services in many countries, especially where regulatory mechanisms mandate, in exchange for access to the publicly owned airwaves, minimum levels of news broadcasting, public service announcements, guaranteed access to political candidates under equal air-time rules, among others. But by the nature of their commercial imperatives, commercial broadcasters are often constrained in the degree to which they can contribute to public good and good governance. Fleming (2002) observes that since commercial broadcasters want to deliver audiences to advertisers, they target audiences having the most spending power to reach with their messages. Fleming further notes that as broadcasters face pressures to maximize profits and to minimize costs, they tend to deprive the public of diversity of programmes and ignore minority interests. A significant aspect of their limitation is that most commercial broadcasters in the developing countries, including Ghana are politically oriented, and as discussed in the Empirical and data analysis chapters, they tend to pander to the political interests of their owners at the expense of the public interests.

Direct state or government monopoly radio ownership and control always opens the medium to potential government manipulation, a situation that can seriously comprise the potential for broadcasters to serve as a reliable source of impartial information, and diverse perspectives, and to play a positive role in governance and development. This broadcasting system does not empower citizens or promote effective and equitable participation, or accountability. As a result, benefits of broad-based participation (such as improved policy design and implementation, and greater ownership over development) are unlikely to be realized. Even more seriously handicapped when they are subject to government control are broadcasters' abilities to promote governance accountability.

However, Myers (2008) argues that these distinctions are only approximate because there is much overlap. Myers notes for instance that many radios operating under private commercial licenses are, in fact, closely controlled by the state through the ruling party and/or family ties. The issue of political control of private radio, has been taken up in more detail in the data analysis chapters of this study, suffice to indicate that it is a common phenomenon in many developing countries, including Ghana. Myers, like many other observers, has cast doubts on the community ownership of many community stations in developing countries, noting that CR stations are often not truly owned and controlled by communities. This observation is a reality because, as noted below, real ownership and control are often vested in local business-men, international NGOs or religious groups without representative boards of community members. Some of the so-called 'community' radio may, in fact, be nearer to a local private commercial station.

Furthermore, Myers argues that which types of stations are best for reaching and empowering the poor depends on the context. In the author's view, when truly community-oriented, CR stations can have some impressive results. Some of the best examples of such stations are found in Gumucio-Dagron's book, Making Waves that captures the empowering experiences of CR across the globe. But there are some radios with a community licence that can be appropriated by negative political forces and used for political ends. Myers concludes that since many commercial radio stations have impressive development content as Buckley et al. (2008) have noted above, "'community' is not necessarily 'good', and 'commercial' is not necessarily 'bad'" (Myers, 2008:11).

In view of the above dynamics, this study agrees with Buckley et al. (2008) when they underscore that all these type of stations can serve the public interest when there is a well-defined broadcasting legal and regulatory framework. For instance, within such a framework, public service broadcasters will be well positioned, including financially, to maintain their independence; commercial broadcasters will be mindful of their public service duties, as these will be spelt out in the regulatory framework; community broadcasting will be defined in law as a distinct tier with clear rules on commitments of broadcasters to their core principles. However, many countries, including Ghana, lack such clear legal and regulatory framework for broadcasting development, a situation that accounts for many challenges they face in regulating the operations of all the broadcast sectors.

Nonetheless, the structures of community ownership, non-profit and non-partisan nature of community broadcasting are necessary, not only in order to free CR from vested economic and political interests, in principle, at least, but also to make CR a district medium of communication in this current wave of deregulation that has facilitated a market-driven media environment (McManus 1994, cited in Ufuoma, 2012) where the economic and political interests media owners override those of the public. To further illuminate the understanding of CR as district from its public service and commercial counterparts, its core characteristics of community ownership, not-for profit and non-partisanship are discussed below.

5.1.2. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

Drawing on various authors, the community ownership structure essentially distinguishes CR as a broadcasting system founded and owned by the community. The basic meaning of the community ownership principle is that, at best, CR stations are community communication systems that are established by members of particular communities to cater for their communication needs. Among the submissions on the communal-ownership of CR, that of Fraser and Estrada (2001) perhaps best captures its essential features. To them, a truly community-owned radio emerges when its facilities have been acquired with the community's own resources and when the community owns the radio through a trust, foundation, cooperative, or some similar vehicle. What this means is that the members of a community, motivated by their community consciousness, decide they need a radio

station to further their community life, initiate a process and pool necessary resources to establish a station.

Virtually all scholarships on CR identify deep community participation as an indication of community-ownership of a radio station. Community participation is widely viewed in terms of community's involvement in a wide range of issues on the station. Of particular significance, the ownership principle entitles community members to participate in important decisions on a station's objectives and operations (Bosch, 2014). That is why Lush and Urgoiti (2012) argue that community participation goes hand in hand with community ownership because greater participation can result in greater community ownership as communities will identify more closely with their station. As an important element, participation gives freedom to community members to comment and criticize a station's operations through continuous interaction between producers and receivers of messages (Carpenter et al., 2008). Alumuku (2006) argues that the basis of participation is to promote a society where CR stations mobilize everyone in their communities for the identification of their community problems and problems as well as actions to solve them.

Another cardinal indicator of community-ownership and participation of CR is its democratic management ethos. This implies that at the minimum level, the community should elect the board of management of a CR station (Fairchild, 2001). The main function of the management body of a CR is policy formulation that will reflect objectives set for it by the community, but it is also responsible for selecting a general manager for the day-to-day administrative and operational affairs of the station.

The model of community ownership defined above is not often the case in many instances in the founding of CR stations. In some cases, the legal owner of CR is a non-profit group, a cooperative, an NGO, a municipality, or a company acting on behalf of the community (Lush & Urgoti, 2012). Still in other cases, CR stations are owned by private individuals and run as businesses (Vanzyl, 2009).

In many developing countries the principle of community ownership and participatory management characteristic articulated above, have been more of an ideal, rather a reality in many contexts. For instance, Fraser and Estrada (2001) observe that in many instances, it has been more of a norm than an exception for CR stations to be established in ways that prevent them from being truly community owned. Jallov (2012) observes that, typically, so-called community stations have been established by international or religious organizations, government agencies, and small groups of persons or even individuals, who underpin their running costs. Many analysts, including Fairchild (2002) observe that such stations cannot be truly community owned because they are usually more closely associated with the 'facilitators' or 'sponsors' than their communities. In this situation, their objectives, policies, and many other aspects of the operations, may be less in tune with the communities' agenda than those of their owners.

However, experts, including Myers (2008) suggest that for many communities facing economic deprivation and who are unable to pool resources for the establishment of a CR station that meet the ideal ownership model, such external interventions could be the only option. Accordingly, this model can represent a truly-community owned radio when ownership is transferred to community members by the founders.

There are more advantages associated with a truly-owned stations than shadow ones. Key among them is sustainability. Ojebode (2013) cited Gumucio-Dagron to discuss three types of sustainability. Social sustainability refers to sustaining the community support that a CR receives. This is expressed in terms of voluntary work, donations and participation in station activities. Institutional sustainability refers to the general organizational framework in which a CR operates. This includes external factors such as the legal and regulatory framework in which a station works. Institutional sustainability requires that a station remains within the ambit of the law. Financial sustainability requires that a station makes enough money to meet its core expenditure areas such as honoraria, repair and office equipment and infrastructure, amongst others. Many analysts, including Ojebode, see social and financial sustainability as most likely the thorniest aspects of CR operations in Africa and that both principles depend on community ownership. Fairbaim (2009), notes that stations with deep community ownership suffer less sustainability problems than those without this vital ingredient. This is because their communities are willing to volunteer services or to donate financially to sustain their own radio. As seen in the data analysis chapters of this study, CR in Africa including Ghana suffer sustainability challenges owing to a low sense of community ownership.

5.1.3. NOT-FOR-PROFIT CHARACTER

According to many sources, including those cited above, CR has a not-for-profit structure, which makes it a broadcasting system dedicated to the service of it community devoid of any profit-making imperatives. The non-profit principle is the key distinguishing feature between community broadcasting and the commercial one. The principle serves to safeguarding CR from getting overwhelmed with commercial imperatives and losing its community-service orientation. The commonest way of guaranteeing the non-profit status of CR is that broadcasting regulators in many countries grant licences to only NGOs that are registered as companies limited by guarantees, and not limited liability companies, which are commercial entities (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Buckley, 2011).

It is important to note that the non-profit requirement does not debar community broadcasters from operating along business lines such as generating commercial revenue. Indeed, income from commercial advertisements forms a large part of the revenue base of most community stations. However, at the heart of it is that there are no individual owners or shareholders to share profits; its members collectively decide on how to use its excess resources. Available extra resources are usually

ploughed back into strengthening key operational areas like programming, renewing equipment, etc. (AMARC, 1998).

Some countries with relatively more matured community broadcasting culture have put in place specific laws to ensure adherence to it. Lush and Urgoti (2012) report that Denmark has specific laws on the not-for-profit structure that obligate community broadcasters to show evidence of reinvestment of surplus income.

5.1.4. NON-PARTISAN AND NON-SECTARIAN CHARACTER

CR is a broadcasting system that is non-partisan and non-sectarian in its character and operations. This means basically that CR stations should maintain independence from governments and political parties' manipulations and influences. The non-sectarian angle entails adherence to a non-bias and non-discrimination stance towards any individuals, groups or sections of the community of a CR station (Buckley et al., 2011).

The assumption is that the non-partisanship ethos of CR would ensure that its operations and distribution of broadcast services are devoid of all political and ideological manipulations that characterize public and commercial broadcasting (Buckley et al., 2011). By this neutrality, CR would gain the confidence and trust of its community as a basis for providing non-restricted access of the broadcast services for all community groups and individuals, irrespective of their gender, political, religious, and ethnic or any ideological backgrounds (Jallov, 2012).

It is important to point out that the non-partisanship ethos does not imply that politics and governance related issues are outside the imperatives of community broadcasters. Rather, community stations have a special role in mobilizing marginalized communities to participate in these processes as active and responsible citizens. AMARC succinctly captures this as follows: "Community radio is about politics, in terms of democratization of societies, but not in terms of partisan politics,..." (AMARC, 2007:23).

What is essential to espouse in this character is for CR stations to adhere to a non-partisan editorial policy and to detach the management and programming of CR from all forms of bias and undue partisan interests (Buckley et al., 2008). Kur et al. (2013) add that when interacting with political and other interests, this should be based on transparency so as to avoid suspicions of bias.

5.2. DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

It was indicated in Chapter One that during the last three decades of the twentieth and the early part of the twenty-first centuries, decentralizing governance has become one of the most popular policy reforms undertaken across the continents of Latin America, Asia and Africa. By the first half of the twenty-first century, almost every country in the developing world had experimented with one form or the other of decentralization (Crook & Manor, 1998; Oxhorn, Tulchin & Selee, 2004; Oluwu & Wusch, 2004; Bardhan & Pranab, 2006).

According to the sources indicated above, even though the influences of decentralization in countries across the continents are the result of a series of quite different and even contradictory ones, a common factor that spurred the moves was pressure to decentralize by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international financing agencies. These agencies had been quite generous for their loans in major infrastructure projects in order to help them start modernization process. But by the late 1970s, with the expansion of government agencies and parastatals and increase in government employees, governments were spending way beyond their means of paying back loans. One of the conditions of further loans and direct grants was to lower the central government responsibilities by devolving some of the functions of the central government to the regional and district level. The world-wide movements for decentralization were driven by economic and political theories that presented decentralized governance as a better alternative to centralized governance.

This chapter is dedicated to discussing these considerations for decentralization, the variants of approaches to decentralization and how they influence the development of local governments in different countries. Beginning with clarifications of the key concepts of decentralization, local governance and good local governance are defined followed by a special focus on the good governance principles of participation, accountability and responsiveness. The chapter ends with a presentation of the conceptual model showing how CR can promote these principles.

5.2.1. DECENTRALIZATION

A widely cited definition of decentralization is by Rondinelli (1981) who posits it as:

> the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource-raising and allocation from central government to (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies; (b) subordinate units or levels of government; (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations; (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities; nongovernmental organizations/private voluntary organizations (Rodinelli, 1998:3).

Rodinelli's definition resonates with those of other renowned scholars such as Crook and Manor (1999:6) and Orhorn et al. (2004:7). To the Former, decentralization is the "transfer of power away from a central authority to lower levels in a territorial hierarchy"; the latter sees it as "the transfer of power to different subnational levels of government by the central government".

From these definitions decentralization is understood as a process whereby functions, powers, skills, competences, means and resources are transferred from central governments to lower levels of governance. The move generally involves the creation of spaces and autonomy for participation in decision making by a variety of lower-level actors that empowers them to plan and execute their own development agenda based on budgets financed with locally raised resources.

Economists and political scientists have proposed decentralization to hold several advantages over centralized governance. Chief among them is the belief that centralized policy planning was dragging countries to the predicament of mismanagement and corruption and that decentralization was to be substituted by local planning and implementation to speed up development (Crook & Manor, 1997; Oluwu & Wusch, 2004; Oxhorn et al., 2004; Rao & Mansuri, 2012). For the economists, decentralization is to inject efficiency in service delivery by improving public spending in responding to local needs due to improvement in information exchange between citizens and local authorities. In addition, decentralization will enable citizens monitor governments' performance and demand improved services thereby incentivizing more effective government response to citizens' needs. Another economic reason for decentralization is that local governments will rely on locally mobilized resources in which case citizens will be taxed to raise revenue for development. This will incentivize the tax payers to insist on quality services and accountability on the use of resources from government and service providers. As Rao and Mansuri (2012) put it, it will be easier for local people to detect and control corruption, neglect and other forms of wrong doing. Besides, the fact that service providers are going to be local people, working in close contact with beneficiaries, will motivate communities to not only complain about unsatisfactory services, but to demand for improvements in these services. The fear of the complaints, for instance will make civil servants become more mindful of the quality of services they provide.

Political science grounds decentralization on democratic theory (Francis & James, 2003; Oxhorn et al., 2004; Grindle, 2004). Its advocates include liberal democrats, political activists, nongovernmental organizations, and human rights groups who hold that decentralization can be a key means of promoting national democratic culture. By bringing governance closer, it is argued, decentralization will enable local people to participate more effectively in its processes. The central view is that participation in local elections in particular can empower local people to reward or punish local politicians leading to responsive and accountable leadership. Furthermore, local politics can become a seedbed for democracy by providing a platform for educating citizens on democratic norms, electoral policies and practices as well as offering a training ground for effective participation in national level democracy. In this regard, citizens' knowledge to vote for responsive and accountable local leadership will influence their attitude in the national level situation. Similarly, local politicians who aspire for national level political positions will acquire the skills for that through their involvement in the local level politics.

5.2.2. DECENTRALIZATION REFORMS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A great deal of governance scholarship agrees that decentralization reforms hold great prospects for promoting good governance at the local level when they are undertaken in a way to give greater transfer of authority, responsibility, resources and accountability to local communities for development planning and execution. In the views of many decentralists, including Oluwu and Wusch (2004), the process by which effective local governance emerges from decentralization reforms are: when

elite chooses to devolve authority, resources, and accountability to communities; when decentralization reforms are defined and promulgated; when redistribution of authority, resources and accountability to communities occurs; when existing institutions, broadened participation by the public, and greater accountability to localities emerge; when improved performance and accountability of local governance institutions reinforce local support for reformed system; and when local governance is a going concern. Across some key literature on decentralization reforms undertaken by countries across Asia, Latin America and Africa (see especially Grindle 2007; Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006) the most successful experiences reflect the above patterns. Greater distribution of authority, accountability and resources have occurred creating greater spaces for citizen participation, and incentives for accountable and responsive local governance. In these contexts, citizens increasingly look to local governments in their aspirations for better and more secure neighbourhoods, better health and education services, and programmes to enhance economic opportunities. Specific examples are most municipalities in Mexico, Argentina, the Philippines and South Africa (Grindle, 2007).

The contrary situation, the scholarship cited above claims, is where many developing countries, particularly in Africa undertake decentralization reforms that do not lead to viable local governments. The main reason is that, even though the reforms announced by political actors usually involve long processes of legal acts, the outcomes reveal in reality hidden motives of the elite to dispense with obligations, while tightening their control. The usual strategies adopted are that elite announces reforms to devolve authority, resources, and accountability to localities; decentralization reforms are defined and promulgated; and redistribution of authority, resources and accountability to localities is announced. But the usual patterns that emerge are: incomplete statutory reform that blocks effective control by local authority; resources are retained or recaptured by central actors; local councils are ineffective because of low levels of education, poor organization, infrequent meetings, internal division, and executive dominance; poor performance and non-accountability of local governance institutions discourages local support for them; local governance remains weak; and recentralization occurs.

This cosmetic approach to decentralization is unsurprising because the political actors who announce the reforms do not actually want to shift power and resources away from them. Rather, the leaders and their dominant political parties decide to maintain tight control of the local government units to, among other purposes, reward political leaders with jobs and funding and to prevent significant political opposition (Oluwu & Wusch, 2004). This strategy enables local leaders to continue their exclusive access to wealth of the nations (White, 2009: 1-43).

Oluwu and Wusch's book, Local Governance in Africa name Kenya, Cote de voir, Nigeria, and Ghana, as typical examples of countries that have promulgated and implemented revised rules and responsibilities for administrative political personnel, establishing the framework for some sort of local governance, but the reforms have produced weak local government systems mainly due to incomplete reforms.

According to Oluwu and Wusch (2004), this is what has resulted in decentralization reforms of many African countries where local governments are characterized by ineffectiveness in citizen participation, decision-making by local legislative bodies and inadequate resources for local services as well as inadequate local authority over policy implementation and personnel. In the case of Ghana as discussed in Chapters One and Two, the main problem is the limited decision-making power of local government. Even though local communities elect their representatives to the DAs, the funding and effective permissions are given exclusively to the DCEs from the central government.

Oluwu and Wusch (2004) links national democratization to decentralization for effective local governance arguing that democratic decentralization at the centre helps with democratic decentralization at the periphery. In other words, the quality of governance at the centre can indeed compromise democratic governance at the community level. Oluwu and Wusch (2004) point to the South African, Ugandan and Botswana cases noted earlier, as the most significant on the African continent, where decentralization reforms were undertaken under democratically elected governments while those of Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya, took place under authoritarian regimes. In Ghana's case, the country's decentralization was presented as a way of bringing back democracy under the military rule of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings (Ayee, 2004). And as Ayee explains, that is why the reform did not make much more progress under Rawlings government, both before and after the formal democratization of the state.

It is pertinent to call attention to the fact that the extent to which the relationship of the centre to the periphery and the management of particular programmes and functions by local governments is defined by the type of decentralization embarked on. Rodinelli came out with the following widely accepted forms of decentralization: devolution, deco centration, and delegation.

Devolution, according to Rodinelli, involves the transfer of authority, responsibility and accountability to autonomous and independent local government bodies aimed to empower the local government units to take decisions on planning, budgeting, implementation, management, among others. It is for this reason that devolution, also known as political decentralization, is generally regarded as the most advanced form of decentralization capable of establishing local government. It presents the most direct link with democracy where citizens, including the poor and marginalized can participate in electing their representatives to established sub-national forms of government, ranging from village councils to state level bodies and are empowered to influence a wide range of decision-making processes. Uganda, Zambia, South Africa and Botswana are examples of countries in Africa that pursue the devolutionary type of decentralization. It is clear why these countries have often been cited as having real local governments, with Botswana and South Africa reputed to have the best on the continent. In Botswana it is civil society that drives local decision-making for development not central government (Oluwu & Wusch, 2004). The opposite cases are Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya among many other countries whose decentralization programmes can be described as cosmetic.

Unlike devolution, deco centration and delegation are considered limited forms of decentralization because they are generally regarded as public sector reforms that focus on transferring authority and responsibility for public functions from central government and are not designed promote effective local government in a way that lend support to the wider involvement of citizens and the private sector in relation to working with and monitoring local governments.

While these distinctions are important, the literature on decentralization show that most local governments experience all types of decentralization at the same time. For example, as Grindle (2007) notes, local government may be coping with a devolved education system that continues to vest authority over standards and testing in national ministry; a de concentrated health system that requires local government to be responsible only for the maintenance of local clinics; the full delegation of property tax collection; and the devolution of responsibility over sanitation within norms set by national or provincial governments. In Ghana, there appears to be an emerging consensus that the three types are being implemented in country's decentralization programme: de-concentration at devolution at the regional level; devolution at the district level; and delegation at the sub-district level. According to Ahwoi (2017), with de-concentration at the regional level, some of the national level workload such as coordination, harmonization, monitoring and evaluation is being shifted to the RCCs without necessarily transferring the corresponding authority to make decisions at that level. With devolution at the district level, there is legal conferment of powers and specific performance of specified functions by MMDAs, which have been constituted into bodies corporate and therefore required to exercise those powers and perform those functions without reference to any higher or central authority. Delegated decentralization at the sub-district level takes the form of the MMDAs assigning some of their responsibilities to the sub-district Sub-Metropolitan District and Urban/Zonal/Town/Area Councils and Unit Committees to perform on their behalf.

5.2.3. LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Before conceptualizing local governance, it is instructive to briefly discuss the term, governance. Governance is variously defined by leading scholars in governance and global institutions (see Kaufmann, 2004; Grindle, 2007; The World Bank, n.d). This study subscribes to the UNDP's definition that states:

> Governance is the system of values, policies and institutions by which society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions – achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations (UNDP, 1997:12).

From the definition above, the key features of governance can be unpacked as follows: it involves the processes of decision-making and how decisions are implemented; decision-making concerns the management of a society's economic and social resources - the allocation, delivery and use of services and public utilities to groups in society – for instance, from water and electricity to education and employment opportunities. The term comprises institutions, mechanisms and processes to arrive at decision-making and to implement the decisions made. Furthermore, the term comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions to allow citizens to influence decision-making. Governance goes beyond the state to embrace a broad range of social institutions and necessarily include considerations of civil society. In other words, governance implies the ways through which citizens and groups in a society voice their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Central functions of governance include policy making, planning and development of programmes as well as the allocation, delivery and use of public utilities and services to citizens based on these policies, plans and programme.

As noted in Chapter One, civil society is a crucial part of governance. The term civil society is variously defined, but this study refers to the conceptualization by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID, 2007), which sees civil society as:

> The multitude of organizations, movements, and groups where citizens organize to pursue shared objectives or common interest … These organizations function beyond the individual or household level, but below the state (DFID, 2007:3).

The above definition indicates that civil society can be seen in organized or disorganized forms. The interest of this study is the organized civil society, termed civil society organizations (CSOs). Detailed characteristics of CSOs and functions in governance are discussed in Chapter Eight of the study, but they are essentially networks that are important players in fostering interaction between citizens and the state. CSOs link citizens to the state through formal and informal bridging mechanisms, as well as bonding citizens to each other. In many cases, CSOs offer the only opportunity for poor people to engage with the state, becoming the voice of the people and ensuring that government decision-making is carried out in the best interest of citizens (DFID, 2007).

In the developing world, including Ghana, NGOs and CBOs occupy a prominent place in the CSO sector. Indeed, in the rural areas, they are the most common forms of CSOs, with them being equated with the broader civil society family (Kokor, 2001; Gausha-Pasha, 2006). My study focuses on CR's collaborations with CBOs and NGOs sectors of CSOs because in the rural areas of Ghana, including the study site, those are the most common form of CSOs.

It is, therefore, pertinent to capture the meanings of the concepts of CBOs and NGOs and to provide a general picture of their existence in the study area. Kavada (2014) draws on various sources to describe NGOs as entities that include a variety

of organizations that range from charities to think tanks. Key characteristics of NGOs include non-profitability, commitment to the public good, and dependence on a variety of funding sources that include sponsorship fees and private donations (Kavada, 2014). NGOs have gained recognition for their lead role in contributing to human development, especially in the developing world. In Ghana, NGOs are credited with immerse contributions to the socio-economic advancements of rural communities, working to improve health, education, and water and sanitation sectors by complementing the efforts of the government to bring such services to the rural poor areas in particular.

The term CBOs refers to grassroots organizations and networks formed by people living in rural and urban areas, especially the poor and the marginalized, which the members often depend on to meet a wide range of needs (Narayan et al., 2000; Opare, 2007; Mulwa, 2010). CBOs are formed on the basis of voluntarism and willingness of their members to pool available skills, resources, talents and time for their common good (Opare, 2007; Mulwa, 2010). As compared to NGOs, CBOs have lower status and are engaged in more limited range of activities such as meeting the immediate needs of their members (Mulwa, 2010). CBOs are both formal and informal member-based organizations. The formal ones are those registered by government authorities, and governed by hierarchical structures of leadership with a binding constitutional framework (Narayan et al., 2000) whilst the informal ones are unregistered groups with loose management structures, and often guided by cultural values of common good (Mulwa, 2010; Opare, 2007).

Writing on the importance of CBOs Narayan et al. (2000) found in their famous study, Voices of the Poor Crying for Change, that in many villages across the study sites, including Achy and Kok Yangak in Brazil, poor people in particular considered their own organizations and networks to be the most dependable and effective institutions in solving many of their daily problems rather than other institutions including local governments. These organizations of the people functioned as important agents of change in communities, contributing immensely to the socio-economic advancement of rural communities. Beyond the personal benefits to their members, CBOs play important developmental roles in their communities. For example, Opare (2007) found that in Ghana, Zimbabwe and India, CBOs served as conduits for implementing development activities, enabling government agencies, donors and NGOs to undertake them at lower cost associated transportation, accommodation and other out-of-the station expenses.

Shah posits that local governance encompasses:

> direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighbourhood associations in pursuing collective action by defining the framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of local public services...it includes the diverse objectives of vibrant, living, working, and environmentally preserved self-governing communities (Shah, 2006:3).

To the UNDP, local governance

> ... comprises a set of institutions, mechanisms and process through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences, and exercise their rights and obligations at the local level (UNDP, 2004:2).

From the two definitions, local governance is understood as the way in which power and authority are exercised at the local level among different stakeholders and actors in taking important decisions. It seeks to include the multiplicity of formal and informal relationships between different actors in development (e.g. local government, the private sector, associations, de concentrated agencies, CSOs) that shape and influence the output and effectiveness of political and administrative systems at a subnational level.

5.2.4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

It is important to clarify that local government and local governance mean different things in the governance literature. Shah describes local government as comprising,

> specific institutions or entities created by national constitutions ... by state constitutions, ... by ordinary legislation of a higher level of central government ..., by provincial or state legislation ..., or by executive order ... to deliver a range of specified services to a relatively small geographically delineated area (Shah, 2007:2).

From the definition, local government is used to refer to the legal, institutional and territorial arrangements within which the business of governance is executed. It is a government that is specific to a particular locality, for example a district; or is concerned with the governance of a specified local area, constituting a political sub-division of a nation, a state or other major political units. Local government can, therefore, be described as a support structure within which local citizens take actions focused on providing and maintaining basic community-level problem-solving activities, which will ultimately raise the living standards of the local communities. On the hand, Local governance, according to Barnette et al. (1997), is a broader concept and looks beyond local government administration to institutions and structures that enable citizens to participate in governance processes and empower civil society units to demand good governance.

It is, nevertheless, important to state that local government provides the foundation for the effective functioning of local governance. It plays an administrative function, the hub around which many administrative activities of local government take place. Local government units undertake responsibilities that were hitherto performed by central government departments and the civil service. Councillors are involved in making and unmaking administrative decisions in councils and in communities that have direct bearing on civic services to the local people and on nation building activities (Shah, 2007).

A key task of local government is to secure a greater degree of coordination among the network of multiple actors including central government agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector. As coordinating elements, local governments carry out core functions of public-sector resource mobilization and expenditure management (Ahwoi, 2000; Shah, 2007).

Furthermore, local government represents a legal concept, providing a legitimate authority for local governance. Local government bodies are authorized to make and implement laws, to raise funds, draw and implement development plans and budgets. The financing and budgeting powers enable local government to establish an innovative finance system and to adopt approaches for funding infrastructure and services while maintaining a better balance between revenues and expenditures (Shah, 2007).

Two types of local government are distinguishable (Oluwu & Wusch, 2004; Ahwoi, 2010). They are:

1. Local state administrations, which manage and run local affairs on a day-today basis; and
2. Local representative bodies such as municipal councils.

Whilst the former are governance bodies that may either be directly or indirectly elected, as the case in many local governments, or appointed, by a higher level government or community representatives (Oluwu & Wusch, 2004), the latter are mixed forms of governance bodies whereby some representatives are appointed and others elected. An example is Ghana's local government system where the MMDAs are made up of members elected by the people and those appointed by the government, known as government appointees.

There is a specific relevance for this study in differentiating local government from local governance. This study is more concerned with local governance than local government for the main reason that if the role of CR under discussion were to promote local government, it would be more about supporting the local government system than holding it accountable for services as the study intends to argue.

5.2.5. GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Good local governance is best defined by clarifying the term, good governance. The UNDP (2007) describes good governance as being

> participatory, transparent … accountable … effective and equitable … promotes the rule of law … ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources (UNDP).

The simplest way to understand the concept is to unpack its key indicators from the definitions. Drawing on the two definitions and others, a governance system can be described as "good" when it is characterized by:

1. Effective citizen involvement (participation) in decision-making processes about how economic and social resources are allocated, delivered, used, and maintained.
2. Consensus orientation that involves the mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved.
3. Transparency, which calls for information on government programmes and transactions to be made available, accessible and understandable to the public. Decisions that are taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations.
4. Rule of law, which requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially; full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities; and impartial enforcement of laws by independent judiciary and an partial and incorruptible police force.
5. Accountability, which means that officials of public institutions should be ready to explain and justify their actions and decisions to the public. An essential of accountability is about the minimization of corruption in public life.
6. Responsiveness, requiring that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.
7. Effectiveness and efficiency, which means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal as well as the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.
8. Equity and inclusiveness meaning ensuring that a society meets the well-being of all its members without excluding any group particularly the most vulnerable.

Good local governance can be defined in terms of the application of the good governance principles outlined above at the local level. Indeed, the Aberdeen Agenda on the Commonwealth principles on good practice for local democracy and good governance adopts these indicators in its 10 principles.

For example, it highlights in principles 4 and 5 that, for good governance to prevail at the local level, there should be opportunities for all citizens to participate in local decision-making that are locally appropriate and serve the needs of local community. This includes active participation in the local democratic processes. It adds that for quality governance, local governance has to be conducted in a manner that is accountable to the community it serves and that this requires robust and independent regulatory bodies put in place to safeguard against corruption, mismanagement and the misappropriation of the use of resources by local government, politicians and officials.

5.3. CONCEPTUALIZING PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS WITHIN GOOD GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

It was indicated in Chapter One that the study will focus on the principles of participation, accountability and responsiveness for the specific reason that these indicators are most prominently articulated in the design of the country's local governance. For this reason, this section of the chapter aims to clarify these concepts to help draw up the conceptual model on how CR can help promote their realization.

5.3.1. GOVERNANCE PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation has been well established in current discourse on governance and development as crucial for sustainable development. It generally refers to engagements of stakeholders of development activities purported to foster a sense of ownership of the development processes (see Rao & Mansuri, 2012; Cornwall, 2010; Mulwa, 2010). For the past twenty years, the concept of participation has been widely used in this sense. Particular emphases have been placed on community involvement in development projects. The scholars cited above agree that participation here is often used to refer to groupings of people in village communities and urban neighbourhoods in the management of projects. These groupings are often "created" to participate collectively in the projects to improve their circumstances. In this type of participation, neither the voices nor the inputs of the 'target groups' or beneficiaries are deemed significant in the design and implementation of the projects, nor the processes involve consciousness raising about the problems to be solved. As Cornwall (2002) notes, the role of communities is to provide minimal support in the implementation of already designed projects, which means that development professionals simply keep on doing things for the people.

Participation has been enhanced to incorporate citizen rights and local democratic governance that are found in both southern and northern countries (Cornwall, 2002). This is what the scholarly literature widely term political participation (Gaventa & Valderrana, 1999; Oslen, 2001; Crook & Manor, 1998). The term has been defined variously, but the conceptualization by Parry et al. (1997) seems to best suit the purpose of this study. To the authors, political participation is "... the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies" (Parry et al., 1997). This definition underscores political participation as entailing citizens' active engagement with political institutions, structures and processes that affect them. Within these systems, citizens undertake activities aimed to influence decisions taken by public representatives and officials that can impact their well-being.

The above definition is pertinent to this study because it seeks to conceptualize participation as an indicator of good governance as the active involvement of people in decision making processes. The study also looks at participation in terms of collective actions that include election related activities such as voting and

campaigning (Crook & Manor, 1998) that are oriented towards influencing the representatives in government, rather than active and direct participation in the process of governance itself (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999).

Activities that underpin political participation have implications for the notion of good governance. For instance, in traditional representative democracies, when voters express their preferences through electoral politics, it is the job of the elected representatives to hold the state to account and to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of their electorates (Gaventa, 2002). Furthermore, the power of citizens to vote out non-performing governments or their representatives can constitute accountability and responsiveness checks. This is applicable in Ghana's democracy in which the Constitution provides for the citizens to elect their representatives to the Parliamentary System of Government to participate in the governance processes with their task being law and policy making.

Scholarship on governance identifies two key conditions as crucial for the promotion of effective participation in governance: an active civil society and vibrant media. CSOs can represent the general citizenry in policy-planning by bringing their sectorial expertise and ground experiences on realities to bear (Grindle, 2007; Cheema, 2011). For example, some CSOs have been involved in designing and implementing poverty reduction and global level initiatives like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for many developing countries, including Uganda (Gausha-Pasha, 2006). In Ghana, such CSOs representation includes the Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) that have served on various committees to draft policies on the use of oil revenue for the development of the country. CSOs can serve as alleys for citizen mobilization for political participation in democracy related activities such as monitoring of elections to ensure that they are free and fair as well as promote voter education (Cheema, 2011). The role of the media in promoting citizen participation in governance as noted in the preceding chapter, rests in its ability to provide a forum for public debates on key policy issues. Robust media debates can lead to the formation of public opinion that can in turn influence government policies.

5.3.2. PARTICIPATION WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

As underscored earlier in this chapter, participation is a central motivation for decentralizing governance. Participation in local government processes aims to enable citizens, including the marginalized and the poor to be directly linked to institutions and structures of local government systems within which their rights to participation are legally guaranteed. Through participation, local people can contribute their capacities in deliberative decision-making about how economic and social resources are being allocated, delivered, used, and maintained (Oslen, 2007; Gaventa, 2002).

Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives/counsellors (Oluwu & Wunsch, 2004). Representation means that certain individuals or groups (representatives) act or speak on behalf of others.

Representatives: a) will be elected or appointed based on clear criteria and following agreed upon procedures; b) should bring forward and defend the concerns and interests of their constituencies, but at the same time work towards consensus building; and c) account for their action to their constituency (Oluwu & Wunsch, 2004). In Ghana, participation in local governance affairs is both direct and indirect. Citizens participate directly in the election of their representatives to the DAs and in civic activities like tax paying and communal labour. Indirect participation is through the elected assembly members.

The literature indicates varying and innovative methodologies of participation in local governance found in various countries across the world. The most widely used ones range from bottom-up participatory planning (PP) and participatory budgeting as it is done in India, the Philippines and Brazil to citizen monitoring in Bolivia (Oslen, 2007) to public referenda and citizen consultation in Europe (Gaventa, 2002). In Ghana's local governance system, as indicated in Chapter One, participation in planning and budgeting is a key arena for policy formulation that the local constitution and laws provide for in the DA.

PP and PB processes have been variously defined. This study draws on Ahwoi (2017:11-12), who captured the following key definitions of the concepts:

1) "A process whereby communities work together with elected officials to develop policies and budgets for the community",

2) "A process of prioritization and joint decision making through which local community representatives and local governments actually decide on the final allocation of public investment in their cities on a yearly basis",

3) "Turning over budgetary and planning decisions to the citizens for whom the budgets and plans have a bearing, creating public arenas in which citizens can discuss and set the city's priorities or choose some new investments affecting a percentage of the municipal budget ... a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making in which ordinary city residents, not necessarily organized in associations, decide how to allocate part of a public budget through a series of face-to-face meetings. These meetings come in the form of local assemblies, workshops, planning tables and a broad range of other events".

From the above, the major characteristics of PP and PB include the following: the inclusion of all citizens directly or indirectly in the formulation and implementation of the annual plans and budgets of local government in a manner that supports the poor, the marginalized and the disadvantaged to facilitate a fairer distribution of resources.

For development planning and budgeting to be really participatory, certain conditions have to prevail. Ahwoi (2017) posits the following requirements: first PP and PB requires that participants are equipped with knowledge and the technical skills in the field to enable them contribute effectively to the processes. But as Oluwu and Wusch (2004) further note that in most countries in Africa most

councillors neither have the skills nor support facilities to enable them effectively scrutinize local budgets or audit reports: a situation that hinders their effective contributions to the budgeting and planning processes of the local councils.

Second, the processes should be subjected to debates and discussions with members of the public, using appropriate and accessible channels. The public deliberations can ensure that public priorities are correctly reflected and the decisions or public opinion are binding on local governments (Ahwoi, 2017). This requirement is far from being fulfilled Ghana's case where there are virtually no community discussions and debates on the development plans and budgets of the DAs and where the processes are limited to the DAs with almost no local community inputs.

The third and perhaps the most important condition is that local government units should have the power to implement the plans and budgets without interference from central or any intermediary level of government; without this autonomy these sessions would be of little usefulness. It is for this reason that the central government control of policies of the DAs in Ghana is of much concern as discussed in Chapter One.

In the light of the above challenges associated with local governance participation, the theoretical supposition that local governance lays the foundation for effective citizen participation in governance and development, has hardly been accepted by all scholars and practitioners. Rao and Mansuri (2012), for example, have rejected the suggestion that the weakness of participation can be blamed largely on the unwillingness of grassroots poor to participate. They argue that the real problems lie in the central level control of policies, resources and the lack of accountability to local communities, noting that the state of affairs reinforces the idea of elite capture where a wide range of the local governance decision-making and activities are monopolized by a small group of people.

Other methods in local government participation relate to civic activities, including direct involvement in community level activities, paying taxes or levies, civil society engagements pertaining to local politics, or involvement in and influence of civic organizations in local politics (Crook & Manor, 1998; Mookherjee & Bardhan, 2006). These are legitimate methods of participation in Ghana's local governance system where, for instance, the local people are mandated to exercise their civic rights and responsibilities in taking part in communal labour and in tax paying.

As the central argument of this study, independent media especially CR can play the role of effectively mobilizing local communities and providing them the platforms to engage on local governance policy making so as to make the planning and budgeting processes really participatory. CR can undertake effective civic education on the local government election to enable citizens make informed choices among various candidates devoid of the partisan considerations that bedevil the elections.

5.3.3. GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is another important indicator of good governance. In simple terms, it is based on the principle that power holders and duty-bearers render accounts to citizens so that judgment may be made about the adequacy of their performance. A clearer understanding of the word may be found in the following analogy by Cavill and Sahail (2004:157), quoted in McNeil and Mumvuma (2006:1), which states that accountability is "when agent A is accountable to agent B then agent A is obliged to inform agent B about agent A's actions and decisions, to justify them, and to suffer punishment in the case of eventual misconduct".

Thus, accountability is an inherently relational term and implies, to use the terms of Ackerman (2005), 'answerability' and 'enforceability'. 'Answerability' implies agent A is obliged to explain or inform agent B on its actions or decisions. 'Enforceability' refers to capacity of agent 'B' to apply sanctions if it deems the actions and decisions of A are unsatisfactory. This makes accountability an on-going relationship between the two agents and not just the process of providing feedback and encourages 'pro-active behaviours' like information disclosure (World Bank, 2005).

What is implied in the above definitions is that as a key requirement of good governance, accountability demands that public officials inform about, and justify their plans and actions, their behaviour and are willing to be sanctioned accordingly (Ackerman, 2005). As well, it behoves power holders such as public officials, private employers, donors, service providers, traditional leaders, NGOs to answer for the manner in which they exercise the power entrusted them. Power in this sense can take political, financial, or other forms (World Bank, 2005). Such exercise of power must be in accordance with relevant laws and be devoid of abuse, inefficiency, ineffectiveness and unfairness as well as that service providers and public officials are to conduct their work in an open, transparent, and responsive manner (Rasheed & Olowu, 1994, cited in McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). Furthermore, accountability holds that all power holders, including the state, should be prepared for reward for good performance, or for sanction for abuse.

As an important aspect, elected representative are obliged to report regularly to the electorates on their work and are required to meet the expectations as well as fulfil promises. This means that in Ghana, the Members of Parliament (MPs) and the Assembly Persons are to report to the constituents on their work in Parliament and at the MMDAs, respectively, to enable the electorates to evaluate their performance.

Corruption is a key concern in accountability; good governance emphasizes that corruption in public life be eschewed. Generally defined as the "use of public office for private gain", corruption has in recent times attracted massive waves of concern and debates, cantering on its effects on the construction of good governance and development. Among other ills, it is considered one of the worst forms of economic injustices as it goes to benefit individuals and sections of society at the detriments of the public good. Therefore, good governance calls for effective mechanisms to

prevent, check or deal with corruption. The mechanisms should consist of rules, duties and functions for the scope of action of the power holders in these institutions and indicate the manner and extent to which people, groups and institutions will be able to hold power holders to account. In other words, all states, governmental institutions, and service providers should put in place accountability mechanisms.

The fact that the media are strong accountability mechanisms as underscored in the previous chapter needs reiteration here. The role of independent media in a country is to promote governance accountability by ensuring governmental information flow to enable citizens to hold government accountable and by watching over government to unearth government doings. However, it is an obvious fact as stated in the previous chapter that when the media system in a country does not prioritize the public good but rather serve to promote the personal and political interests of media owners, the ability of the media to function effectively in promoting governance accountability has often been compromised.

5.3.4. TYPES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The World Bank has identified two sets of accountability mechanisms, categorizing them as supply and demand side accountability. The supply-side ones are termed upward accountability, horizontal accountability and downward or vertical accountability (World Bank 2005). These have varying degrees of exacting accountability.

Upward accountability is directed towards central governments and donors. A classic example is found in Ghana's local government system where the MMDCEs owe near total allegiance to the sitting presidents and the ruling political parties that appoint them, leaving very limited accountability powers for the people. Thus upward accountability is considered an ineffective tool in holding governments answerable to citizens.

Horizontal accountability requires government officials to report 'sideways' to other officials and agencies within the state. Here, systems are put in place to enable state institutions to check on abuses by other public agencies and branches of government (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). The goals of this type of accountability are often intended to ensure that the government uses financial resources and property properly to attain its objectives as efficiently as possible (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). Horizontal accountability mechanisms are also referred to as 'internal' and include: (i) political mechanisms (e.g., constitutional constraints, separation of powers, the legislature, and investigative commissions); (ii) fiscal mechanisms (e.g., formal systems of auditing and financial accounting); (iii) administrative mechanisms (e.g., hierarchical reporting, norms of public sector probity, public service codes of conduct, rules and procedures regarding transparency and public oversight); and (iv) legal mechanisms (e.g., corruption control agencies, ombudsmen and the judiciary) (Goetz & Gaventa, 2001). In Ghana, examples of horizontal accountability mechanisms include the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament (PACP), the Auditor General's Department (AGD), the Economic and Organized

Crime Organization (EOCO), the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Police Service and the Bureau of National Investigations Department (BNI). Added to the list, is the newly established anti-graft body known as the Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) to investigate and prosecute corruption in the country by the NNP government.

Horizontal accountability mechanisms have been deemed to be limited in ensuring governance accountability (Reuben, 2002; Malena et al., 2004; World Bank, 2007). This can be exemplified in Ghana's case where, despite the fact that the anti-corruption institutions mentioned above have over the years unearthed numerous acts of corruption such as financial mismanagements, misapplications and embezzlements, these efforts seem to have impacted little in reducing corruption in the country. Indeed, graft in public life seems to be on the ascendency, a situation that heightens public negative perceptions about the ability of the relevant institutions to deal effectively with the canker of corruption.

Downward or Vertical Accountability requires government officials to report 'downward' to the public (World Bank, 2005). Sometimes referred to as 'external' governmental accountability, vertical accountability contrasts with horizontal accountability; main vertical accountability mechanism is elections. But, elections have been described by scholars like Malena et al. (2004) as a very 'blunt instrument' with which to hold government accountable, the main reason being that, whereas elected officials can be held accountable through elections, elections cannot affect the vast majority of appointed bureaucrats who are not subject to electoral processes.

Hence elections may not succeed in making unelected public office holders responsive. This well describes the Africa-wide situation where for example, unaccountable politicians can buy votes from the majority of poor electorates with stolen public money.

5.3.5. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Downward or demand-side accountability, as the second set of accountability mechanisms, include what is termed social accountability. These have risen as a response to the ineffectiveness of the supply side ones in promoting public accountability. They have been viewed currently as constituting the most effective governance accountability mechanisms (see Wildermuth, 2012; The World Bank, 2006; Malena & McNiel, 2010).

The World Bank (2006:1) defines social accountability as "the broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to hold the state to account, as well as on the part of government, civil society, media and other social actors that promote or facilitate these efforts". In effect, it is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, empowering ordinary citizens and CSOs to participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability.

Social accountability mechanisms affirm and make operational a direct accountability relationship between the citizen and the state. This is known as the demand-side of good governance accountability that emerged more recently to strengthen the 'voice' and 'capacity' of civil society for greater demand of accountability from their elected representatives, authorities and service providers.

Social accountability practice usually involves a wide range of actors from communities, CSOs, government agencies, political leaders, the media to donor agencies. It uses a diverse range of strategies, which include civic education, media advocacy, coalition building and partnerships. It relies on mechanisms and practices such as public policy-making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, monitoring of public service delivery and investigative journalism. These approaches are all underpinned by common building blocks: obtaining, analysing and disseminating information, mobilizing public support, and advocating and negotiating change.

The power of social accountability can be exemplified in some development initiatives undertaken in Ghana over the last decade. The areas included participatory budgeting, participatory planning, participatory resource mobilization, participatory fee-fixing processes, participatory performance monitoring and participatory evaluation (ILGS, 2013). Communication means, including the media play a vital role in social accountability. These serve to disseminate information on social accountability activities and to advocate for changes.

A number of studies have documented some of the initiatives undertaken by various CSOs and their successes (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2003; Ofei-Aboagye, 2013; Osei-Bimpeh, 2015). One of the very successful initiatives was undertaken by SEND Ghana Foundation in the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), a nation-wide social intervention introduced in 2005 to improve school enrolment, increase domestic food production and enhancing household incomes and food security in in communities.

To contribute to its successes, the SEND-Foundation's social accountability intervention aimed to raise the awareness of beneficiary communities on their rights and responsibilities, increasing their participation and sense of ownership as well as the accountability profile of the programme. A crucial component was the mainstreaming of a communication strategy consisting of the use of national and local level media outlets particularly district based CR stations and outreach events. Thus, platforms were created for engagement among the stakeholders on the GSFP. A study report by Ofei-Aboagye (2013) noted that the project has made a significant contribution to the overall success of the GSFP.

5.3.6. ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AS AN INDICATOR OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Making governance accountable to local communities is an important reason for decentralization. The theories of decentralization for better governance and democracy referred earlier posit that local governance offers improved opportunities for accountability because public officials can be held more directly accountable for their actions as citizens become more engaged in local affairs. The fundamental reason is that when local government structures, institutions and officials can be made more easily answerable to the local people decentralization reforms give greater accountability to communities than to central government (see Crook & Manor, 1998; Grindle, 2007). In the opposite scenario, when greater accountability is to central government than to local communities, there will be unaccountability of the local governance institutions and officials. A classic example of this is the upward accountability of the DCEs to the central government as a result of their appointment by the president, a situation that renders the DAs largely unaccountable to the local communities.

From the earlier discussions this state of affairs seems to be the norm than the exception in many developing countries, strengthening the assertion by anti-decentralists who have sought to debunk the claim that decentralization can improve governance accountability. Indeed scholars such as Rao and Mansuri (2012) and Aroga (2011) found that localization in developing countries has the tendency to promote rampant political interferences, and that, with the increase in the tiers of public employees who are generally poorly paid, there are increased avenues for corruption making the phenomenon a thorny issue.

Virtually all scholars of decentralization local governance posit three main factors that can enhance local governance accountability. Apart from competitive elections discussed in Chapter Two, civil society activism and a vibrant media are the two other key conditions (Barnett et al., 1997; Cheema, 2001; Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006). The central argument is that a strong and mobilized civil society often presents a strong force in demanding improvements in accountability (see Grindle, 2007). Local NGOs and CBOs can monitor and ensure that the power and resources that are devolved to local authorities and the elected representatives are exercised and applied in the full benefits of citizens. Needless to say, this can in turn, present a strong force for propelling local development. For instance, the supervisory powers of the local poor can be strengthened to demand higher accountability in decision making, resource allocation and use as well as minimize corruption. There are numerous examples of acts of civic violence and conflicts as well as legal actions against charges of corruption, malfeasance, and lack of accountability, fraud, and failure to respond to the needs of local residents by mayors in municipalities across Latin America, Asia and Africa (Grindle 2007). This implies that weak CSOs involvement in local governance issues in any country or community will be a bane to local government accountability.

The central role of the media in governance accountability rests to promote regular exchange of information between citizens and local authorities. Independent local media like CR can serve not only as channels or forums that allow citizens to communicate their priorities and concerns to elected officials, but they can, through the media watchdog function, expose corruption and policy failures. It is in the light of the above that this study examines the extent to which Royals FM and CR in Ghana is holding the DAs accountable.

5.3.7. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Social accountability mechanisms have proved particularly useful in the context of local governance. According to analysts including Wildermuth (2014), social accountability has been launched to address several challenges of decentralization. Using the participation, accountability and responsiveness framework this shows in the foregoing that social accountability can present an effective approach for strengthening links between citizens and local government, thereby promoting good governance.

Social accountability processes can improve community participation in policy design, implementation and monitoring as well as give voice to citizens to articulate their needs and demand services. Social accountability can strengthen accountability by improving two-way information flow whereby government officials will gain access to the demands and needs of marginalized citizens, while these gain access to basic information about state authority, resources, and decision-making processes (Wildermuth, 2014). Such improved access to information will enable citizens, communities and independent media to monitor and hold public officials accountable (Malena et al., 2004; Wildermuth, 2014). Thus, the approach presents powerful checks against corruption and other wrong doings.

Social accountability is thus a key mechanism for contributing to poverty reduction and service delivery through pro-poor policy design and empowerment (Malena et al., 2004; Wildermuth, 2014). Its success depends largely on the availability of skills and knowledge to undertake the activities as well as collaborative abilities among CSOs, the media and local government. According to Malena et al. (2004), even when the media and CSOs can collaborate on interventions, failure to work in tandem with local government authorities can affect the outcome due to suspicions of the motives of the interventions.

5.3.8. GOVERNANCE RESPONSIVENESS

Responsiveness, as a key principle in good governance refers to the ability of government to meet citizens needs effectively and timely. For the pro-decentralists, centralized governance increases government inability to respond effectively and efficiently to the varying needs of heterogeneous communities who often make up nation stations (Rodinelli, 1989; Grindle, 2009). The difficulties arise mainly due to several constraining factors such as time and resources on the part of central

government functionaries to obtain information on the peculiar needs of the various sectors of the state.

Decentralization is therefore presented as a means to promoting governance responsiveness on the ground that the proximity of governance officials to local communities holds a greater advantage for them to obtain information more easily on local needs. Thus, local governments are in a position to mobilize and work to plan and implement policies to respond to the needs of people in a given territory. Government institutions can work to address the needs and aspirations of the citizenry by directly and or indirectly facilitating the people's efforts to contribute to the improvements of their own conditions (Steiner, 2005; Oslen, 2007).

The representative nature of local government is the corner-stone of local governance responsiveness because councillors will be able to collect information about the peculiar needs of their constituencies to be factored into the relevant development policies. A good example is the DA system of Ghana where the Assembly members are expected to collate the needs and concerns from their electorates for the preparations of development plans and budgets; the more effective the people's representation, the greater the responsiveness of local government.

Drawing on the relevant literature, local government responsiveness is contingent on three key conditions: the availability of resources for service provision; the ability of citizens to pressure local authorities for improved performance; and an active role of the media. The first case relates to the level of resource devolution. Where there is greater financial devolution to local councils, government authorities are more likely to be more responsive than where resources are retained or recaptured by central actors. In the case of civil society activism, social groups in an active civil society in the local community can exert pressure on the public sector to provide better services by pushing political leaders to improve their performance (DFID, 2007). The media in their agenda-setting function can highlight the most pressing needs of the people and pressure government for response. As shown earlier, strategic collaborations among the media and CSOs and government can significantly enhance advocacy for improved government performance.

5.4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The framework presents interconnections among the concepts of participation, accountability and responsiveness. A link is then drawn between these good governance principles and the traditional role of the media in governance to show how CR can affect these good governance indicators. The two set of variables are then linked to the core principles of CR to demonstrate how these principles serve as supporting pillars for CR in its governance role.

This framework of a systematic approach to analysing the data is illustrated in Figure 5.1 below. The figure has three strands. The first strand represents the good governance indicators and the inter-relationships amongst them. It demonstrates that citizen participation in policy formulation leads to accountability and

responsiveness. The second strand represents the media's governance functions and shows how they can work to contribute to improving the good governance indicators. The third strand presents the principles of CR showing how they create the supporting conditions for the media's functions. Succinctly put, improved participation is through CR serving as the civic-forum for debates on development plans and budgets of the DA, improved accountability is through its watchdog function, and improved responsiveness is made possible by CR's agenda-setting. The principles of community ownership and the use of local language; non-partisanship; and non-profit of CR, respectively, create supporting environments for its civic-forum, the watchdog and the agenda-setting functions.

The conceptual framework is based on the literature review in this chapter on both good local governance and CR. In the former case, it has been established that participatory planning (PP) and participatory budgeting (PB) are two key policy areas in local governance whose formulation provide significant avenues for the involvement of local communities in development processes and serve as accountability and responsiveness mechanisms. PP and PB are processes whereby stakeholders, including elected representatives of local people, government officials and CSOs are involved in the design of the development components of the local government units. Local problems, priorities and solutions are determined in the process and local partnerships between communities, elected representatives and government officials, established. Furthermore, PP and PB together provide citizens with an opportunity to decide how and where public resources are spent. They are accountability and responsiveness tools because the processes engage citizens in negotiations with public authorities over the distribution of public resources. They are thus effective accountability instruments that can address concerns about transparency in the allocation of funds and resources for development. Equally, concerns about responsiveness can be addressed because the most pressing needs and collated concerns of various local communities are brought to the fore by their elected representatives to be factored into the plans and budgets.

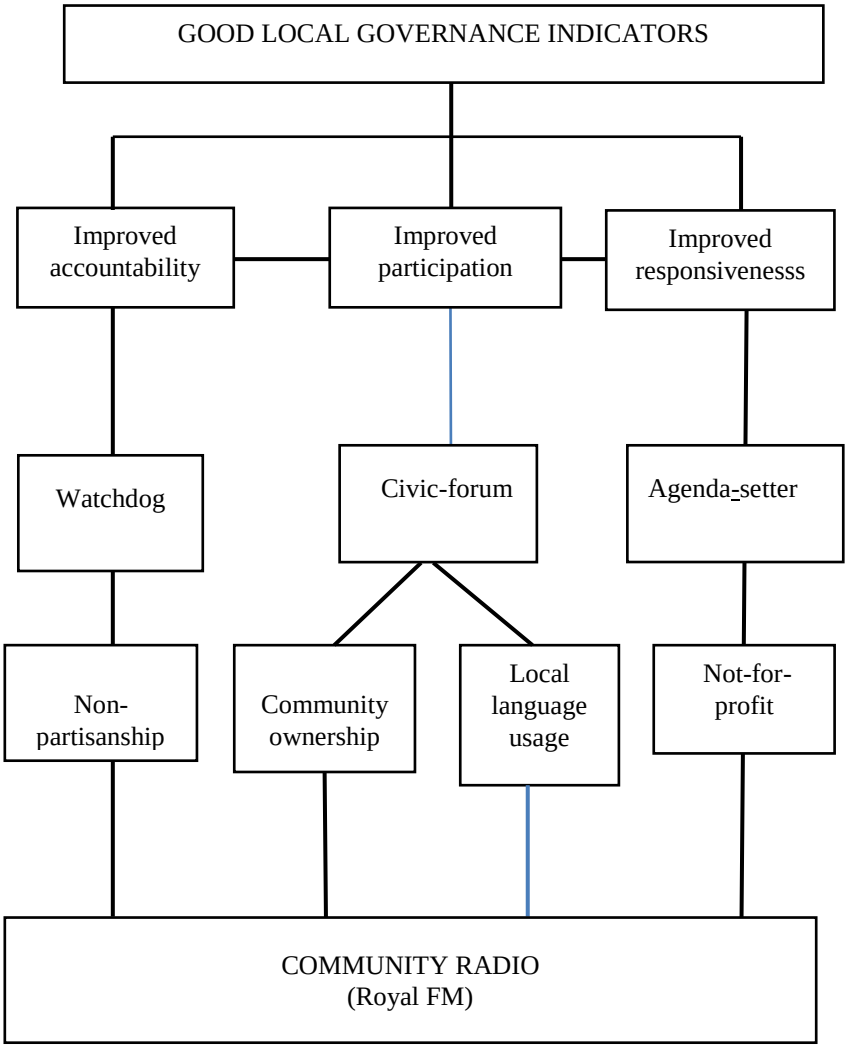
In the latter case, the scholarship espoused CR for its potentials to initiate communication processes that promote quality governance at the local level. Among its numerous advantages in this regard, CR programmes often involve the whole listening audience in discussing matters important to them, in their local languages. This in turn strengthens people's ability and confidence in framing and analysing issues, engaging in informed debate, and pressing local officials for actions (Buckley et al., 2008).

Against these backdrops, the role of CR in promoting good local governance can best be examined using the framework of the traditional functions of the media in governance: watchdog, civic-forum and agenda-setter. From the literature reviewed, the basic function of the media as a watchdog is to ensure accountability, transparency, and public scrutiny by highlighting policy failures, maladministration, corruption, scandals, among other malaise involving the socially powerful, political leadership and public institutions. In its role as a civic forum, an independent press provides an open space for public deliberations and debates on major policy and

development issues, thereby facilitating the expression of multiple voices that go a long way to help individuals form and shape their opinions on matters of public importance. The media by its agenda setting function is able to shape the nature and focus of public discourse, due to their controlling of the means of information dissemination. This, to a large extent, can help the public to determine the importance and non-importance of national or community level issues, depending on the visibility and salience put on them. Perhaps the ultimate goal of its agenda-setting is for the media to draw the attention of policy makers to society's most pressing needs and to strengthen government responsiveness.

This study notes that even though Ghana's decentralization programme has been designed to promote good governance with emphasis on participation, accountability and responsiveness as embodied in the relevant legal provisions, in practice, these principles are not being realized. There is a problem of weak citizen participation in decision-making at the DAs, weak accountability of the Assemblies and the people's representatives to local communities and ineffective responsiveness to the development needs of the local people. The study argues that the problem has been largely linked to poor communication flow, blameable on ineffective functioning of the Assembly members and the Unit Committees as communication structures as well as a dormant posture of the media in championing local governance issues, relative to its role in national level governance. CR has been proposed as a potentially more effective communication medium than other types of media in Ghana's media landscape for enhancing the good governance principles at the local level.

Figure 5.1: *Framework of conceptual model*



Source: Elaborated by author, August 2019

5.4.1. IMPROVED PARTICIPATION THROUGH MEDIA CIVIC-FORUM ROLE

Citizen participation in Ghana's local governance as provided for in the PP and PB processes of the MMDAs as well as the election of the Assembly persons is to lead to the formulation of the budgets and plans that form the basis for the development of Annual and Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs) of the Assemblies. The MTDPs constitute the key socio-economic development policies that affect a wide range of local development.

The main argument here is that Royals FM can be an independent platform for mobilizing the people in the Wenchi Municipal District for analysis, interactive discussions and debates on MTDPs. To this study, the drafts of the MTDPs, could be presented on air and with the help of the technocrats, key elements can explained in accessible language to the public. This would demystify the policies (that are usually couched in inaccessible language to the masses), and makes possible for the people to make inputs and comments that could contribute to modifications and finalization, taking into account the people's views. Since most of the local citizens do not have direct opportunities to participate in the planning and budgeting, the radio becomes the main avenue for them to comment on the budgets and plans. The final plans would thus be products of the debates with the on-air participation laying a foundation for accountability because these plans could hardly be implemented in ways that would deviate from the weight of public opinion built through the debates. Thus accountability and responsiveness can be guaranteed in the MTDPs.

Royals FM can play a crucial role in the elections of the Assembly members through civic education on the need to vote and by providing airtime to the candidates to campaign to enable the electorates to make informed choices. The station can monitor the elections to ensure transparency and accountability.

The study further argues that a solid foundation for mobilizing the community for effective participation in decision-making processes could rest on two of the core principles of CR: (i) a strong sense of community ownership, which essentially could empower the community to take vital decisions that prioritize the community needs to focus on; and (ii) local orientation, particularly the exclusive use of indigenous languages of communities, which could enlist everyone, including the illiterate sectors in development and governance discourses.

Figure 5.1 above illustrates the interconnections between the civic-forum function of CR and the communal ownership and local-orientation principles.

5.4.2. IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH THE MEDIA WATCHDOG ROLE

As noted in several places earlier, local governance accountability requires local government councils and their elected representatives to be answerable to local people. This can be achieved through regular reporting and feedback-giving on

decisions and actions taken at the councils. It also involves the local government authorities to be answerable for the implementation of development policies. The main argument here is that local governance accountability can be enhanced through the watchdog role of CR. Royals FM can play a watchdog to promote accountability at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly in a number of ways. Basically, the station can focus on providing information to the people on the general decisions and activities of the Wenchi Municipal to enable them to hold the Assembly accountable. More importantly in its accountability role, Royals FM can fight corruption at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly by exposing such acts. This can have significant implications on responsiveness because it would help to ensure that funds that would have been diverted for private use would be available for development. The reduction of corruption would boost the confidence of local people to pay taxes.

The study argues that concept of non-partisanship can be the strength of Royals in its watchdog function. Indeed, the pictorial illustration in Figure 4.1 shows that there is a strong link between non-partisanship, watchdog practices of CR and good local governance. The GCRN Codes stipulates that CR should not support any political party or candidate publicly, show bias or favouritism towards a political part or candidate. This concept of CR is invaluable towards achieving its watchdog functions in the sense that when CR stations are politically neutral, they often help the public repose confidence in them.

5.4.3. IMPROVED RESPONSIVENESS THROUGH THE MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING FUNCTION

Local government responsiveness basically requires that authorities meet the development needs of the people timely. Independent media especially CR can promote government responsiveness through agenda-setting, which involves highlighting the most pressing needs of citizens and pressuring duty-bearers for prompt response. Agenda-setting here entails Royals FM mounting pressure on duty-bearers, public officials involved in local governance, regarding the most pressing and pertinent issues affecting the local community.

The study argues that the not-profit orientation of CR can be a strong factor in the fulfilment of its agenda-setting functions with concomitant enhancement of good local governance. Since by its non-profit status a CR is not influenced by financial gains unlike it commercial counterpart and is dedicated to development, the medium can champion the course of providing free-to-air services on local governance and political parties and candidates for both national and local level elections.

Figure 5.1 above depicts above the interconnectivity between the not-for-profit structure of CR and its agenda-setting role.

5.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This is the second chapter of the three-chapter series on review of extant literature. This chapter is primarily concerned with clarification of relevant concepts of Community Radio and effective local governance. It developed a conceptual framework on the role of CR based on three-pronged indicators: participation, accountability and responsiveness. These indicators are highly instrumental to good governance at the local level. Pertinent concepts of CR were developed namely: community ownership and control, community participation, community service, not for profit and non-partisanship. These concepts underpin the present study. For example, stations with deep community ownership are often sustainable through financial, volunteer and contributions of the community and are usually hallmark of giving voice to the voiceless and staunch advocate of participatory model. As the key distinguishing feature, the concept of not-for-profit enlivens the operation of CR to pursue the service of the community devoid of commercial activities that can erode the cardinal relevance of CR. Ghana has no law in place to accurately define not-for-profit, however this is catered for via the bye laws of GCRN stipulated to guide member stations. The chapter underscores the fact that non-partisan or non-sectarian concept does not imply that CR is void of political issues; rather it implies that CR is void of partisan politics and deeply entrenched in mobilization of marginalized communities to actively participate in local governance and censure. Hence, this chapter underscores the fact that participation at the grassroots is at the core of CR paving way for all-a-sundry to voice their opinions and position in local governance.

The remaining section of the chapter critically reviewed empirical studies on each of the concepts of CR earlier discussed to clearly demonstrate the superiority of CR in championing the process of giving voice to the voiceless and emancipation of marginalized community from the ills of local governance. The chapter further reviewed existent literature on the relationship between decentralization and local governance with the moderating influence of CR. The review showed that decentralization does not necessarily translate to good local governance except there is a platform for citizen participation in the decision making process, accountability to citizens and responsiveness to their needs. This chapter demonstrated that since the cardinal attribute of CSO is to foster active interaction between citizens and the state, they collaborative efforts by CSOs and CRs is a formidable prerequisite to decentralization with concomitant good local governance.

CHAPETR 6. AN OVERVIEW OF THE DECENTRALIZATION POLICY REFORMS IN GHANA

This chapter deepens the review started in the preceding chapter on Ghana's decentralization and local governance. A special focus is on the current system with a view to elaborating specific challenges that hinder the effective operations of the DAs. These challenges point to possible areas of CR's intervention towards the improvements of the country's local governance. The empirical sections of the study, in Chapters Eight and Nine, have demonstrated varying degrees to which Royals FM have been able to address these challenges in the Wenchi Municipal District.

6.1. THE CURRENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS UNDER THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

Ghana has a long history of local governance dating back to pre-colonial days when communities had their own mechanisms of governance that revolved around the chiefs and their elders (Ofei-Aboagye, 2008; Ahwoi 2010). The British colonial masters adopted the Indirect Rule that relied on traditional rulers to facilitate communication and decision-making in the colony (Ahwoi, 2010).

In the post-independence period, local governance significantly engaged the attention of both military and civilian rulers (Ayee, 2004). Ayee further observes that governments in Ghana after independence focused on decentralization because it was seen as a condition not for only socio-economic development of the country but also as a way of achieving their political objectives such as recentralization of power and legitimacy. Notably, the first post-independence leader, Kwame Nkrumah's CPP government introduced policies that, to all intents and purposes, sought to gain greater recentralization of governance. According to Crook and Manor (1994), Nkrumah believed that rapid socio-economic development, which would see greater improvements in the living conditions of the people, was the only justification for gaining independence.

Each of the successive governments after Nkrumah, starting from General J.A Ankrah and the National Liberation Council (NLC) that overthrew the Nkrumah government had shown interest in overhauling Ghana's local government system. This was evidenced in the number of commissions the various governments set up. Ahwoi (2010) reports that, within a period 25 years (i.e. between 1957 and 1982), as many as ten Commissions were set up by the various governments to inquire into the local government reforms in the country. These Commissions include the J.A Ankara's Mills-Odoi Commission in 1967 and the Akuffu Addo's and Siribo's Commissions in 1968. In 1974, General I.K Acheampong and the Supreme Military Council (SMC) that overthrew Ankrah formed the Okoe Commission. In 1982, J.J.

Rawlings set up three commissions, namely the Kufuor's, Sowu's and Kaku-Kyiamah's Commissions (Ahwoi, 2010; Ahwoi, 2017).

As indicated in Chapter One, the current decentralization programme is the brainchild of the military regime led by Jerry John Rawlings under People's National Defence Council (PNDC). The PNDC overthrew the democratic government of the People's National Congress (PNC) of president Hilla Limann in 1981. Rawlings introduced a law known as the PNDC Law 207 in 1998 to usher in the DA concept with the aim of giving power to the people and creating opportunities for them to participate in the decision making process as well as in activities concerning the development of their localities.

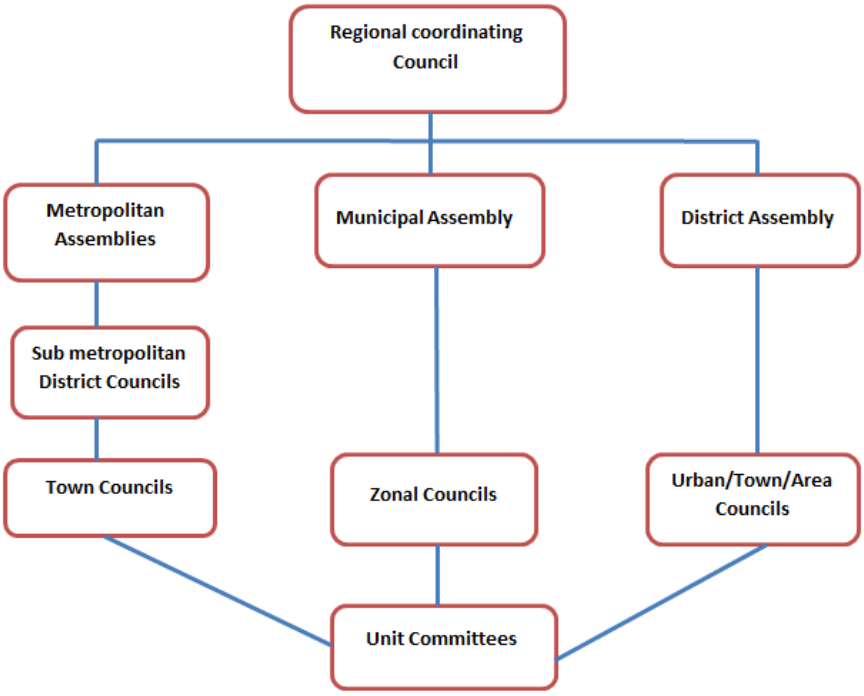
The country was demarcated into 110 administrative districts, which paved the way for the first DA elections to be held in 1989. The PNDC Law 207 was revised and embellished into the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993 upon the Fourth Republican Constitution on January 7, 1993. This was because it became obvious that the decentralization programme required a Constitutional provision that would provide the essential building blocks towards achieving decentralization (Ahwoi, 2010).

The broad framework for decentralisation is provided in two broad chapters, Chapters 6 and 20 of the 1992 Constitution. Article 240(1) stipulates that Local Government in Ghana shall be decentralized as far as practically possible, which indeed gave firm foundation to Act 462 of 1993. Other laws that support the realization of the decentralization policy in Ghana include; the Local Government Service Act, the National Development Planning Systems Act, 1994, Act 480, the National Development Planning Commission Act, 1994, Act 479, Civil Service Law, 1993 (PNDC Law 327).

The decentralization programme involved the (a) transfer of functions, powers, responsibilities and resources from the central government to local government units; (b) putting in measures that would enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan, initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies in respect of matters affecting the local people; (c) providing the local government units with sound financial bases with adequate and reliable sources of revenue; and (d) ensuring popular participation in local decision-making.

The Constitution spells out a four-tier system for the Metropolitan Assemblies and three-tier for Municipal and District Assemblies, respectively. Figure 6.1 below illustrates this structure.

Figure 6.1: Structure of the New Local Government System in Ghana



Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (1996).

6.2. THE KEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONARIES

The first tier of the Ghana's local government system is the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), one in each of Ghana's 10 regions. The main task of the RCCs is to co-ordinate the plans and programmes of the DAs and harmonise them with national development policies and priorities to become a regional development plan. They monitor and evaluate the performance of all the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and resolves conflicts in the region as well as functions assigned to it by the Central Government.

By this the RCCs perform a de-concentrated function at the regional level, in which the national level workload such as coordination, harmonization, monitoring and evaluation is being shifted to them without necessarily transferring the corresponding authority to make decisions at that level.

6.3. THE METROPOLITAN/MUNICIPAL/DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES (MMDAS)

The Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies form the second tier. Chapter 6 of the Constitution, which is the Directive Principles of State Policy, provides that the Metropolitan Assembly is established for districts with a population of 250,000. The Municipal Assembly is established for single compact settlements with population of 95, 000 and over. The District Assemblies are established for geographically contiguous areas with population of 75,000 and over.

The MMDAs consist of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MDCEs) appointed by the President, elected Member(s) of Parliament representing constituency or constituencies in the district, 70 per cent of members directly elected by universal adult suffrage on non-partisan basis, and not more than 30 per cent of members appointed by the President in consultation with the chiefs and other interest groups. Currently, there are 260 MMDAs in the country, which includes the site of this study.

As indicated in Chapter One, the MMDAs are supposed to be agents of change at the local level and must try to harness all efforts within localities and harmonize them into national development strategy. Being the highest political and administrative authorities, the MMDAs are specifically charged to, among other functions: (a) exercise responsibility for the overall development of the district and ensuring the preparation and submission development plans and budgets through the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) to the NDPC) to the MoF, respectively; (b) execute plans, programmes and strategies for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district; and c) initiate programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and providing municipal works and services in the district.

Clearly, the Assemblies have an arduous task to perform as development agents and particularly as the highest political authorities at the local level. To do these effectively requires greater transfers of responsibility, resources and authority to the Assemblies and accountability to the local communities (Ayee, 2004; Ahwoi, 2017).

6.4. KEY CHALLENGES IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN GHANA

This section discusses in detail specific challenges in Ghana's decentralization programme that relate to the central control of planning, budgeting and financing of the MMDAs as well as the government appointment of the MMDCEs. Others include partisanship and corruption at the Assemblies. The overall effect is that the MMDAs suffer severe limitations in spite of the devolution of authority to them, a situation that undermines the principles of effective local governance espoused in literature.

It is important to note that the challenges of Ghana's decentralization presented in detail under this section, deeply contradict good practice approaches to decentralization for effective local governance. These conditions are discussed in a detail earlier under Chapter Five. The main argument there is that, that decentralization reforms that produce effective local governance are undertaken in a way to give greater transfer of authority, responsibility, resources and accountability to local communities for development planning and execution. Particularly, local government units must be allowed to implement their development plans without interferences from central governments (see Rodinelli, 1981, 1989; Crook & Manor, 1998; Oluwu & Wusch, 2004).

Ayee, in his article *Ghana: A Top-Down Initiative*, best captures the key centralizing features in Ghana's local government system. Although the DAs have been given planning and budgeting authority, development planning has, however, remained largely under national government control through the National Development Planning Act (NDPA). The Act requires the DAs to send their development plans for harmonization into regional plans. The regional plans are then forwarded to the Development Planning Commission (NDPC) for integration into national development plans. The result is that the individual DAs' development plans get swallowed up in the national plans at the end of the day.

Central government controls the budgets of the DAs. The DAs are required to submit to the RCCs before the end of the financial year, a detailed budget for the districts stating the revenues and expenditures for the ensuing year. After collating and coordinating the budgets for the districts in the region, the RCCs submit regional budgets to the MoF for approval. The MoF and the MLGRD control and influence the implementation of the development plans and budgets by the DAs. Under DACF Act, the minister of finance in consultation with the MLGRD is authorized to determine the category of expenditure of the approved budgets of a DA that must be met out of the DACF. In effect, DAs spend their share of the Common Fund on projects approved and directed by the MOFA and of the MLGRD. The overall effect of the control of DACF is that it seriously constrains the financial autonomy of the DAs and increases financial control of central government.

In a related area, central government disbursement of the DACF is irregular to the DAs. Chapter 20 states in Article 240 (2)c that there shall be established for each local government unit a sound financial base with adequate and reliable revenue. As the DACF is the major source of funding for the Assemblies, clauses 2 to 6 of Article 252 of the Constitution mandate the Parliament of Ghana to annually make provision for the allocation of a percentage of total revenues of the country to the DAs for development. According to Article 252 (1) of the Constitution, Parliament shall annually make provisions for the allocation of not less than 5 per cent of the total revenue of Ghana to the DAs for development. This amount is supposed to be paid into the DACF on quarterly basis. The money that accrues into the DACF shall be distributed among the DAs on the basis of a formula approved by Parliament.

The problem is that central government release of the DACF to the DAs has been fraught with perennial delays as this has hardly been done on a quarterly basis as stipulated. At every time, the Central Government owes backlogs of arrears of the DACF.

The DACF is to be supplemented with Internally Generated Funds (IGFs) and Ceded Revenue. According to Act 462 of the Constitution, IGFs are derived from six (6) main sources: rates, land, fees, licenses, and trading services and miscellaneous sources. The reality is that central government controls the best-revenue-yielding taxes whilst leaving the tiniest and difficult to collect taxes for the local units (Ahwoi, 2010). The result is the frequent inability of the local government units to meet their targets in the internal revenue generation. The overall situation creates over-reliance of local governments on the DACF, which in turn constraints the ability of the Districts to implement the approved development projects. In fact the MMDAs do not have corresponding funding to perform their main function of providing services adequately.

Another critical aspect of the central level control relates to the appointments of the MMDCEs as indicated above. The Constitution empowers the President to appoint them in consultation with other stakeholders, notably, traditional rulers and opinion leaders and CSOs in each district. In practice, the main determinant of the appointments is loyalty of the appointees to the political parties in power, a situation that is termed 'jobs for the boys', a reward system for political party foot soldiers. This is of serious concern because it makes the MMDCEs largely unaccountable to the Assemblies and the local people. The only level of accountability lies in the provision for their confirmation by the elected representatives of the local people at the DAs, a process that usually makes more manifest political partisanship in the DAs where supporters and non-supporters of the appointing government battle for or against the confirmation of the appointees. This state of affairs is a recipe for corruption in vote buying (Ofei-Aboagye, 2008). Meanwhile, by virtue of their appointments, the MMDCEs wield enormous power and influence at the Assemblies. The fact that they are appointed by the President makes them defenders of central government policies rather than advocates of local autonomy or local authority interests (Ahwoi, 2017). They are seen as representatives of central governments and dominate decision making of the DAs to such an extent that members of the Assemblies have the tendency to accept decisions made in the interest of the DCE's and by extension the central government, rather than the public (Ayee, 2004).

This state of affairs contributes significantly to the ineffectiveness of Ghana's local governance in a number of respects. It makes the MMDAs weak because the general principle in establishing effective local government empowers the local government councils to exercise oversight over the executive (see Oluwu & Wusch, 2004). In other words, the legislatures (councillors) should have much more powers than the executives. This seems to be the model espoused by the successful local governance systems in most Latin American countries and a few in Africa such as Botswana and

South Africa (Oluwu & Wusch, 2004). In Ghana's case, however, the DA as a key institution and its operations, are not designed to empower the Assembly members to carry out oversight responsibilities over the executive (the DCEs). The Assembly members are often incapacitated in influencing the policy process due to the dominance of the DCEs, not to mention their lack of technical skills to contribute effectively to the policy making processes of the Assembly (Ayee, 2004; Ahwoi, 2010; 2017).

Moreover, the current practice of the appointment of the DECs conflicts with the theory of competitive local governance elections as a key condition for promoting good democratic local governance. According to scholars such as Grindle (2007) and Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006), competitive local government elections can serve as a critical motivation for incumbents to want to prove their competence in the management of public affairs and to seek to find new ways to addressing important problems. The argument further goes that competitive local democracy can enhance opportunities for greater accountability of local governance because officials are likely to be more mindful of the activities they carry out, while voters are more likely to have better information on local government performance than they do about those at the national or even the state level. This can enable voters in local government elections to reward or punish, respectively, those who perform well and those who do not. Thus political competition creates strong electoral incentives for politicians to pay attention to the interests that voters have in living in well-governed communities. In his book, *Going Local: Decentralization, Democratization, and the Promise of Good Governance*, Grindle (2007) cites Mexico as a shining example of where competitive party elections for mayoral and council positions increase pressure on the incumbents to perform effectively while in office.

Expectedly, the problems of accountability of the appointed MMDCEs in Ghana, have generated clarion calls by many people, including scholars, political parties and CSOs in advocacy for the conversion of Ghana's local governance system into a competitive democracy in which the MMDCEs and the Assembly persons will be elected on multiparty basis (Ayee, 2004; Ofei-Aboagye, 2008; Ahwoi, 2017). However, this apparently laudable idea has not been without rancour. Notably, the two leading political parties in the country, the NDC and NPP have been divided over the idea; whilst the NPP has been an advocate, its arch rival, the NDC has staunchly opposed the idea. The NDC party, have argued against making Ghana's local governance partisan with the main reason that it would worsen the already politically polarized Ghanaian society, which has been caused by national level politics, ethnicity and chieftaincy. In the view of the Party, that state of affairs would further fray the communal Ghanaian spirit that the framers of the Constitution, in their wisdom, sought to prevent (Ayee, 2004: Agyei-Aboagy, 2008).

Nonetheless, the NPP has been poised to pursue its multiparty election agenda. The current President, Nana Akufo-Addo, who won power on the back of the Party made it a campaign promise in the 2016 General Elections, to have the MMDCEs elected

on a partisan basis. Preparations are far advanced for a National Referendum to be held in December to 2019 to seek the amendments to Articles 243(1) and 55(3) to pave way for political party participation in the local elections. Following a successful Referendum, the first partisan elections of the MMDCEs will be conducted in 2021 to be followed by those of Assembly members in a later date. Needless to say, the partisan nature of Ghana's local government system would engender greater accountability. The political parties' involvement would incentivize high performance of the Assemblies since the effectiveness of the elected officials would determine the chances of their parties winning national elections. As argued in Chapter Nine, it would enhance the role of the media, including CR in promoting accountable governance since the media would be a major accountability mechanism for the elected officials.

Meanwhile, a related situation that amplifies the need for the introduction of multiparty system Ghana's local governance, relates to what has termed a deeply entrenched informal partisanship that has characterized the local level elections for a very long time. Ghana's decentralization stipulates non-partisanship of the DA elections. Political parties are proscribed from local elections as provided for in Article 248 (section 1 and 2) of the 1992 Constitution, which states that:

> A candidate seeking election to the District Assembly or any lower local government unit shall present himself to the electorate as an individual, and shall not use any symbol associated with any political party. A political party shall not endorse, sponsor, offer a platform to or in any way campaign for or against a candidate seeking election to the District Assembly or any lower local government unit.

Evidence on the ground, however, points to the involvement and influence of political parties in the DA elections (Ofei-Aboagye, 2008; Ayee, 2004). The dominant political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) provide financial and logistical supports to candidates towards their campaigns. Ayee (2004) reports that this state of affairs has taken root since the periods of the DA elections of 1994, 1998, and 2002, explaining that for the political parties, the DA elections are conduits for mobilizing grassroots support for the national level elections.

Empirical evidence from a GCRN case study conducted in 2014 further points to the influences of partisanship in the day-to-day operations of the DAs. In the study that was meant to find out how much the participants knew about partisanship in Ghana's decentralized local governance system and whether there were experiences of partisanship relating to the operations of their CR stations as a basis for drawing up a non-partisanship code to guide the operations of CR stations in Ghana, most of the respondents showed overwhelming knowledge of the presence of partisanship in the Assembly elections. They gave evidence of financial inducements by candidates vying for elections in communities meant to influence their voting. The study respondents believed this situation was made possible by the political parties'

financial donations. The respondents expressed regret that in the light of the practice, the results of most DA elections did not reflect the free will of the people. The overall impact of the state of affairs, according to the study respondents, is that most Assemblies are divided along partisan lines, which naturally influenced debates during general meetings along partisan lines. Although the current state of affairs, potentially prepares ground for the proposed competitive local elections to thrive, in its current form, it poses a challenge to good local governance in the country. The proposed multiparty elections, in addition to the improved accountability benefits, would legitimize the prevailing on official partisanship in the system.

Another problem at the DAs is corruption. The Auditor General's Annual Reports as carried in the media reveal widespread regularities in the use of the DACF and breaches of procurement procedures. A most notable example is a news report on the "Regional News" file of the Ghanaweb of Friday 26 September 2014, titled Auditor-General Report on the Management and Utilization of District Assemblies Common Fund and other Statutory Funds. In the story, gross misappropriation of state funds to the tune of GH¢48.4 million between the 2010, 2011 and 2012 fiscal years were contained in the Auditor General's Report, attributed to non-compliance with legislative framework and weak monitoring systems by key figures in the Assemblies that continued to cost the state huge losses.

Evidence on the ground indicates that the Auditor General's Reports could be the tip of an ice berg of what is happening in the Assemblies as many other acts of corruption are un-captured in the Reports. For example, Diedong and Naaikuur (2012) report that some local government officials and revenue collectors of the Dangbe West DA in the Greater Accra Region were allegedly sharing monies from internally generated funds every weekend, which was meant to reward and remunerate themselves for their work in collecting the revenue. According to the report, revenue dwindled during in the period as tax payers were angry over the illegalities with many of them vowing not to pay taxes anymore.

6.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The review in this chapter review traced the institution of local government back to pre-colonial days (by community chiefs and elders) through the British Colonial Administration that employed Native Authorities or elites to facilitate communication and decision-making and paved way for corruption all types of vices by colonial masters. During post-independence governance was centralized with concentration of power in hands of few elites. Although local governance went through several reforms, the Fourth Republican Constitution of January 7, 1993, guarantees that the decentralization process initiated by the PNDC government were not eroded and provision was made for broad framework for decentralization in the constitution as stipulated in Chapters 6 and 20. This provision resulted in local government structure comprising a Regional Coordinating Council, a four-tier Metropolitan and three-tier Municipal/District Assembly, respectively. This chapter

outlined composition and functions of key local government structures and offices, which include the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) and the Metropolitan/Municipal/ District Assemblies (MMDAs). The current number of the MMDAs stands at 254.

Giving a special focus on the challenges that hinder the effective operations of the structures, the main ones identified are following: a) the top-down design of Ghana's decentralization, which renders the DAs ineffective. For example, the central government's control of Assemblies development plans and budgets constrain their authority to implement the policies the Assemblies design; b) the president's appointment of the DCEs, which obstruct their accountability to the Assemblies and the communities; c) corruption in the DAs as a canker that deprives communities of needed resources for development; and d) the inability of assembly members to maintain close contact with the electorate due to logistic constraints and poor remuneration, for which reason their effective representation of the local communities leaves much to be desired.

Based on the above challenges the chapter argues that CR can facilitate programmes that empower people at the grassroots to hold Assembly member to account, and intensify their watchdog monitoring of local governance proceedings, so as to adequately fill the aforementioned accountability gaps.

CHAPTER 7. STUDY AREA: PROFILES OF ROYALS FM AND THE WENCHI MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

This chapter has two parts. Part one explains the rationale for the selection of Royals FM, followed by a detailed presentation of the station's profile whilst part two presents the profile of the studied District, the Wenchi Municipal, highlighting features relevant to the study.

7.1. PROFILE OF ROYALS FM

7.1.1. BACKGROUND OF ESTABLISHMENT

Royals FM derived its name from an acronym of a CBO, ROYALS, which stands for Rural Organization for Youth in Agriculture, Literacy and Sanitation. The station was founded by Adu Agyarko Pinsang who had a dream of operating a radio station that would address the developmental challenges of the people of the Wenchi District. ROYALS obtained a broadcast licence and went on air on 15th December, 1998.

It is important to note that, despite the purported development orientation of Royals FM from conception, its founder did not set out to establish a CR station as he knew very little about the CR concept. In fact, the operating licence had been issued for the operation of a commercial station. In 2000, Royals FM was affiliated with the GCRN and orientated towards becoming a fully-fledged CR. Apart from being a member of the GCRN, Royals FM is also a registered member of the World Association of Rural and Community Broadcasters (AMARC).

However, as discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, the conversion from commercial to a CR station were not accompanied with structural and management processes to transfer real ownership to the Wenchi community, a situation that has implications its public credibility and sustainability.

7.1.2. PHYSICAL LOCATION AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY

Royals FM is located in the central business area of the Wenchi Township for obvious reasons. Plates 2 and 3 in Appendices 2 and 3, respectively, provide pictures of the front view of building housing and the studious of the station. The station broadcasts with 500watts transmitter with and effective coverage area of about 50 kilometres radius on a frequency of 104.7 MHz.

7.1.3. MISSION, VISION AND SLOGAN

The core mission and mission, respectively, of Royals FM are to enhance and broaden the horizon of all people of Wenchi on issues that affect their social, economic and political wellbeing, and to build a community that promotes participation towards the attainment of equitable socio economic development in Wenchi Municipality by offering the marginalized, voiceless and vulnerable fairer opportunity for quality education. The operational slogan of the station is: to give voice to the voiceless.

Through the above indicated mission and vision, Royals FM envisages achieving the following specific objectives:

- being the leading radio station in the promotion of community development;
- developing a strongly united people conscious of their rights and responsibilities through the process of inclusion, and for the promotion of democracy and good governance;
- improving agronomic practices for higher productivity;
- alleviating poverty through linkages and networking with financial institutions;
- conscientising the people to appreciate their culture and traditions and to recognize their roles in development;
- developing a well-educated and informed society; and
- helping the community develop healthy living through appropriate and acceptable lifestyles.

7.1.4. PROGRAMMING

Royals FM's programming policy is based on its mission and vision to provide participatory broadcasting services to educate, inform and involve its community in its activities. These are translated into the following programme thematic areas:

1. Democracy and governance
2. Education on cross-cutting development issues
3. News and current affairs
4. Advertising
5. Programme sponsorship
6. Social announcements

Most of the educational programmes are produced with community participation using a combination of field and studio-based formats.

7.1.5. MANAGEMENT

The management structure of Royals FM is presented in an organogram in Appendix 2 in Figure 2. At the apex head is an Executive Council (EC) that is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies. There is an Executive Director that is responsible for the day-to-day management of the station. The Executive Director works with a Management Team, made up of the Heads of six distinguished departments. As seen in the Organogram, these are the Administration, Finance, Programmes, News, Technical and Marketing. Most of the workers are community volunteers drawing monthly stipends.

7.1.6. COMPETITION WITH OTHER RADIO STATIONS

Royals FM enjoys monopoly in the Wenchi District, where there is currently no other radio station located in the area. However, many radio stations located in the regional capital, Sunyani and other towns have their signals covering most communities in Wenchi Municipal. Apart from the Regional FM of the National Broadcaster, the GBC, all the other stations are commercial.

Whilst the GBC FM and its commercial counterparts all broadcast in a mixture of local languages and English, Royals FM broadcasts exclusively in the Bono dialect of the Akan ethnic group, the largest in Ghana. This is accordance with the Language Policy of the GCRN indicated in Chapter Seven where it is indicated that the liberate use of indigenous language makes the community stations the most listened to by the illiterate and marginalized segments in their broadcast areas.

The rate of increase in the number of commercial radio stations in the Brong-Ahafo Region and the extensive coverage of the public broadcaster and commercial radio stations into the Wenchi communities, presents real threats to Royals FM as it faces fierce competition it faces. Nonetheless, Royals FM sees the competition as a boost for improved performance in being a viable alternative to its commercial and public service counterparts.

7.2. THE WENCHI MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AS THE COMMUNITY OF ROYALS FM

7.2.1. BACKGROUND OF ESTABLISHMENT OF MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

Royals FM is located in the Wenchi Municipal in the Brong-Ahafo Region, one of the 10 regions of Ghana. The Municipality is one of the 260 MMDAs in the country. The decentralization reforms of 1988 established it as a district by Legislative Instrument 1471 of 1989. It was later upgraded to a municipality status by Legislative Instrument 1876 of 2007.

Royals FM defines its community to be coterminous with the geographical area covers by the Municipal. But the current 50km radius means the station does not broadcast effectively over the whole area.

7.2.2. LOCATION AND SIZE

The Wenchi Municipal is located in the western part of Brong-Ahafo Region. Appendix 5, figure 5 shows the location of the Wenchi Municipal Area in Brong-Ahafo Region. The Brong-Ahafo Region has unique economic importance in the country famously referred to as the food basket of the country as it produces the bulk of the Ghana's foodstuff for local consumption and for export. Farming, therefore, is the dominant occupation of the majority of people.

7.2.3. SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The indigenous and largest tribal group of the Wenchi Municipal are the Bonos, a tribe within the largest ethnic group in Ghana, the Akan. There are other minority tribal groups made up largely of migrants from the Northern parts of Ghana, but Bono is the most widely spoken language, in addition to Twi, perhaps the most widely spoken Akan dialect.

Chieftaincy is a key social institution in Ghana, the Wenchi Municipality has five (5) main traditional areas known as paramouncies that form the Wenchi Traditional Council (WTC), an umbrella body of traditional leaders. As discussed in Chapter Three of the study, the traditional system of governance is accorded an important role in Ghana's governance both at the local and national levels, and hence the inclusion of a traditional ruler as a key informant.

The people of the Wenchi Municipal espouse their cultural heritage, an important part of which is the celebration of traditional festivals. Two major ones are the Apour and Yam festivals. Even though the central importance of the festivals is spiritual and serves to provide a link between the people and their ancestors, they have developmental and governance importance to the people of the Wenchi Traditional Area. They serve as avenues for the citizenry to come out openly and criticise those in authority and for those in authority to introspect and make amends for any wrong doings for the better of the society. Royals FM plays several important roles in the celebration of the festivals. These include publicity of the activities free of charge in line with its social good mandate.

7.2.4. POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

The Municipal Assembly is made up of the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) as is the case in Ghana's local system. There are 41 Assembly members comprising 29 elected by universal adult suffrage and 12 appointed by the government, according to the principle in Ghana's local governance discussed in Chapter Two. Figure 5,

Appendix 5 is the regional/ administrative map of Ghana showing the location of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly in the Brong-Ahafo Region and the location of the region in the national context, while Plate 4 in Appendix 6 is a picture of the front view of the Wenchi Municipal District Assembly.

7.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter covers two important components of the study namely: 1) profiles of the case study (Royal FM) and the community within which it operates (Wenchi Municipal Assembly); and 2) the rationale for which these components were chosen. The chapter contextualizes the case study (Royals FM) and the municipality within which it operates. It provided detailed information regarding the status of Royal FM as GRCN member station. The core mission of Royal FM was identified as giving voice to the voiceless and improving good governance via participatory programme at the local level. Several GRCN member stations were sampled but only Royal FM was selected in view of the role it played as non-partisan station during a the 2008 political turmoil involving exploitation of timber in the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. The station provided civic education that gave voice to the voiceless resulting in huge compensation, by the culprits, to the affected indigenes of the community. In another study involving all the 26 GCRN member stations, Royal FM stood out as the only station with active collaboration with CSOs in its operation. This chapter gave ample explication on the profile of Royal FM in terms of its background, physical location and technical capacity, mission, vision and slogan, programming, management, nature of competition it is involved, its competitive edge over other radio stations, and its hierarchical chart.

The last segment of the chapter provided insight into the profile of the local government in area where Royal FM operates. The Wenchi Municipal Assembly in the Brong-Ahafo Region was established as a District following the decentralization reforms of 1988 and later became a municipality in view of the provision of the legislative instrument 1876 of 2007. Relevant information situating the municipality within the framework of the development communication was provided in this chapter. Such information includes its background, social cultural characteristics, and its political and administrative structures.

CHAPTER 8. PERCEPTIONS ON THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY RADIO ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE

This is the first of the chapters that present the empirical results of the study. The focus is to gauge the perceptions of stakeholders in local governance and CR on the role of CR in Ghana's local governance system within the country's pluralistic media system. The questions here focused on, first, seeking the respondents' understandings of CR and its core principles and second, determining how those understandings influenced their perceptions of the role of CR in Ghana's local governance system.

It emerged from the purely qualitative data distilled from the interviews and FGDs that the core features of CR discussed in the first section of the Conceptual Chapter influenced the perceptions of the responds on the role of this medium in respect of the media role in Ghana's local governance. Hence the analysis is guided by a framework encompassing CR's peculiar characteristics with the basic argument that these core tenets hold advantages for its local governance engagement over its commercial and public service counterparts. Each segment proceeds with a presentation of the field findings to be followed with analysis and discussions of the findings as well as summary of the main points in the discussions.

8.1 THE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE

The empirical and conceptual chapters underscored ownership as a critical condition that can influence the good governance role of the media in the context of development since ownership is the main driver of the objectives, policies and content of media institutions. It was pointed out that when public service broadcasters are truly publicly-owned and can maintain independence from government, they have an enormous potential to influence government outcomes.

However, as was noted, because public service broadcasters in the developing countries have a weakness of dependence on government, their ability to serve the public interest and to promote government accountability has often been limited. Unfortunately, such is the case in Ghana. In spite of the 1992 Constitution seeking to insulate the state-owned media from governmental control and interference, their ability to hold government accountable has often been questioned. There has been a considerable amount of criticism on the weakness of the public service media to promote governance accountability in spite of the constitutional powers bestowed on them. For example, in a public lecture in 2017 on the role of the media in promoting politics and human rights in Ghana, a professor in communication and former Director General of the GBC, Kwame Karikari, chastised the state-owned media for their inability to effectively scrutinize government actions. A report on the event

carried in 13th December 2017 edition of the state-owned newspaper, the Daily Graphic, quoted Karikari proverbially describing the media as:

> .... behaving like chickens that have been kept under a coop for a long time, and even 25 years later, they are not waking up, in spite of all the constitutional guarantees for them (Karikari, in Daily Graphic, 13th December, 2017).

Karikari substantiated his claim with an example in which it had taken the GBC a long time to be able to report on a famous, and perhaps, the biggest financial corruption scandal in the recent history of the country involving a business man, known as Woyome. The professor suggested that because Woyome was perceived to be a financier of the NDC government that was in power from 2012 to 2016, during which time the crime was committed, the journalists felt unsure of the reactions of the Minister of Information and feared he might sanction the broadcaster. Karikari alluded the attitude of the public service media in Ghana to their dependence on government subventions for their operations by using the following popular Ghanaian adage "The publicly-owned media in Ghana have been timid in playing their constitutional mandated role of holding the government accountable because the mouth cannot afford to bite the fingers that feed it" (Karikari, in Daily Graphic, 13th December 2017 edition, page 1).

For the GBC, even though the national broadcaster is protected from government control and interference by the Constitution with Article 168 and 169 giving the NMC, an independent Constitutional body empowered to appoint the Board and Director General, certain conditions seem to undermine its freedom from government. The main one relates to its heavy reliance on government for financial support. The Ministry of Information provides about 50 per cent of its recurrent budget and 100 per cent of its capital budget (Buckley et al., 2005). The implication is that the editorial independence of the GBC from government and its commitment to serve the public interest stands compromised.

On the part of the commercial broadcasters, the role played by some radio and television stations in promoting the socio-economic and good governance in the country has to be acknowledged. For instance, some of the hottest public debates on government policies and development programmes do take place on the airwaves of giant stations notably Joy FM and Citi FM. Furthermore, their regional reporters are noted for revealing local level development issues that attract national attention. However, as noted in several places in the thesis, the fact that commercial broadcasting in the country is dominated by with political partisanship, apart from their commercial interests, these factors tend to limit their positive impact on the public interest.

Community broadcasting has always been presented as an alternative to both public service and commercial broadcasting based on its unique features. The main thrust

of this sub-section is to examine how the core principle of communal ownership influences public perceptions on the governance role of this medium.

8.1.1 FINDINGS

First of all, the data revealed varying understandings of the concept of CR and the ownership principle among the study participants. A sample of the most significant views presented here are those of the Traditional Ruler the Legal Officer of the MLGRD Key Informants, the FGD participants in the Wenchi Township, the Agubie and Akete villages.

For some of these respondents, the communal ownership principle of CR was the most definite identification mark in their minds that they could use to distinguish this medium from among other types of radio stations in the country. For a participant in the FGD at Agubie, with whom most of the respondents agreed:

> The name community radio station means that it is a radio that should belong to all the people living in an area, say for example, the people in the Wenchi District. For this kind of radio station, the people in Wenchi... everybody, chiefs, men, women, teachers, farmers ...indeed, every one could say this is our radio station. It is not for any individual or a group. We will all decide what to talk about... (A FGD Participant in Agubie Village 17/02/201).

The Traditional Authority Key Informant's understanding of a CR resonated with the definition posited by the FGD participants in Agubie. To him:

> As the term implies, a community radio is one owned by the people of a community. It is not for the government or any big man like a businessman. It is for all the people in the area. (Interview with Traditional Ruler 18/02/2017).

However, interactions with participants in the Focus Groups in the Wenchi Township and the Akete village revealed different understanding of CR, and by extension, its community ownership principle. It was a unanimous view among the participants in the Wenchi town's Focus Group that a CR station was one that belonged to a member or a group of members of a community who used their own money to start a radio station in their community to promote development and to do business. They specified such people to belong to either the political or business classes noting that they have the wherewithal to undertake such ventures. A participant succinctly put it this way "Community radio is for business and development*"* (FGD in Wenchi, 21/2/2017).

When asked to explain the reason behind the definition, another participant put her understanding in the context of Royals FM, saying that, while the station had been called a CR station, she knew it belonged to a development-oriented member of the

Royal Family of the Wenchi Traditional Area, who established in the name of the Royal Family to help promote the development of the area and make money for himself or the Royal Family.

Similar controversial perceptions on CR and its ownership principle were expressed in the FGD in the Akete village. The most significant one came from a participant who wondered if it was realistic to have a radio station owned by the members of a certain community like the Wenchi District, where vast social, political and other diversities characterize the country's society. As he put it:

> We all know that the Wenchi area is a traditional strong-hold of the NNP Party. And we also all know that there are strong NDC party supporters in the area. Also, there are people from different tribes and religions living in the towns and villages within the Municipality. If we wanted to have a common radio station where all interests will be integrated, would it be possible for the believers of the various parties to give up their political interests in favour of a common interest? Will the supporters of NPP and the NDC agree that the station criticize governments of their respective political parties? Please, let's face the facts of the Ghanaian society. ... (FGD Participant in Akete Village, 18/02/2017).

In spite of the controversies surrounding the understanding of CR, a significant amount of the data pointed to the community ownership principle as a key determinant of CR's attitude towards local governance issues. Indeed, the principle was presented as one that placed CR in an advantageous position over other broadcasters in pursuing local governance. Those whose views are captured on the point included the Communication Expert, the Legal Officer of the MLGRD, the Traditional Ruler and FGD participants in the Wenchi Township.

The Communication Expert Key Informant hinged his arguments on policy-making powers vested in the community. He noted that a CR station's board of directors who were well informed and knowledgeable on both local governance and CR was most likely to prioritize local governance issues in a station's policies. This, he explained, would be in consistency with the developmental mandate of CR and in recognition of local government as the locus of community development. However, the Expert was quick to point out that this would require not only a board of directors who were representative of the defined community of a community station and knew the diverse interests and developmental challenges of the community, but also people who would come from diverse social and professional backgrounds. Such a body, he posited, would constitute not only a system of participatory needs assessment used to identify local development priorities, but would also be crucial to assuring local ownership of a CR station.

The Communication Expert puts his submission in the language below:

> As eyes and touchstone for the community, representative members of the community in the management board, would ensure that what is best for the community is organized and aired with strict adherence to principles of community radio. In effect, through the board, community members can become part of the decision making of community radio through which the feelings, knowledge, understanding and views of the community can be readily garnered. Such a board would be minded and capable of formulating policies for a community station that could effectively influence policies at the DA. More importantly, such a board would be able to find ways and means to obtain the needed human and financial resources for the execution of the policies (Interview with Communication Expert, 27/02/2017).

He then proposed an approach to forming such representative board of Directors for CR in Ghana. To him, the process of electing the boards should be carefully guided so as to ensure representations from critical institutions like the chieftaincy, local governance, and civil society groups such as those based on religion, associations of women, youth and the disabled. For strategic purposes, provision should be made for the inclusion of persons with media, legal and accounting or financial backgrounds. The Expert, however, called for precaution against what he termed a kind of "take over" where it was it was relatively easy for political or commercial interests to move into a public community meeting with their people and vote in board members that represent their interests. To prevent that, measures must be instituted in the basic charter of a station.

The Legal Officer of the MLGRD expressed views similar those of the Communication Expert emphasizing his submissions on the common developmental agenda of both CR and local government. He noted that:

> A station that is owned by the community will be dedicated to community development of the community. How can such a radio not focus its operations on local governance, which cannot be separated from the district assemblies?" (Interview with Legal Officer from the MLGRD 28/02/17).

The Legal Officer held that CR stations in Ghana would be best positioned than commercial and government stations to promote Ghana's local governance agenda because the community members would be more interested to use their radio station to promote their collective interests a station owned by the government, business person or a politician.

The views of the Traditional Ruler Key Informant suggested that its communal ownership would provide CR with a formidable social capital and sustainability base that would support its local governance agenda. In his view:

> A radio station that is for a whole community can stand against the local authorities with the whole community behind the station. This kind of radio would represent the true voice of its community, so whatever position it would take on local government issues would be credible in the eyes of the public, even the local government officials. Besides, the community members would provide all the necessary support including financial for a community radio station's work on local governance issues (Interview with Traditional Ruler, 20/02/2017).

The Traditional Ruler explained further that a CR station that provides good services to communities and defends the interests of the community will find that the community will find ways to support the station. In his words "If all participate and people truly feel that is 'our radio station', then the people will not let the CR go out of existence".

In spite of their unclear views expressed on the concept above, even the participants in the FGD in the Wenchi town were clear that a CR would serve as a vital tool for a community to demand for good governance from their local authorities. A participant explained it this way:

> If we can have a radio station that all of us can actually and proudly call our own station that would be a wonderful kind of radio. This kind of radio can truly help us advocate for have better local governance because we would make sure that the station focuses on the most pressing issues of our community, which include the lack of water, schools and clinics in the villages, poor sanitation in our town and the payment of taxes. Who else can we direct our voices to on these issues if not the district assembly and our assembly members?" (FGD Participant in Wenchi 21/2/2017).

Views expressed by the GCRN's Lead Training Facilitator concurred largely with those expressed by the various respondents above, particularly those by the Communication Scholar with respect to the policy making functions of CR and its implications on local governance. The Lead Trainer sought to suggest that it was in in fulfilment of the powers bestowed on community members to formulate policies for community stations that a key policy document for the Network's member stations, the GCRN's Programming Code, had been formulated with inputs from the communities. He explained that the process of formulating the policy had brought together representative members of the ECs (board of directors) of the GCRN stations to determine a common policy approach for CR programming. This, in turn, was to inform individual policies that would reflect the peculiarities of each member station. To this end, the member stations were required to conduct focus group discussions with key constituencies of their communities to identify core policy areas.

The Lead Training Facilitator alleged that, based on data presented by the Network's member stations during a seminar on the policy formulation, local governance was

identified as a key area that the communities wanted their stations to factor into the said Code. A check in the Programming Code found Articles (ii) and (vi) stating that "CR stations programming shall provide a forum for informed dialogue among community members and stakeholders" ... and "promote transparent and accountable governance at all levels".

The Lead Trainer continued that the importance accorded local governance in the agenda of the GCRN stations informed the formulation of another code known as the GCRN's Non-partisanship Code. A significant part of the Non-partisan Code reads, "In being entrusted with a public resource, the airwaves, Community Radio stations have an obligation to hold other public trustees such as the District Assemblies accountable" (GCRN, 2014:4). The implications of these Codes in the work of the stations in local governance has been discussed in various sections in the thesis, for now, it is important to note that if the conditions for involving the communities in the development of the Programming Code had indeed been met, the Code can be taken to represent, not only a tacit enjoinment by the communities of the GCRN stations to treat governance issues in their broadcast activities as priority, but it even charged the stations to vigorously engage in local governance at their various district communities in order to contribute to quality governance for development.

Consistent with the Lead Trainer's claims, the Executive Director of Royals in an interview claimed that the people of Wenchi had given a mandate to the station to champion a governance agenda based on GCRN's Programming Code indicated above. He explained that the station's EC in a meeting had ratified the GCRN's Programming Codes and that a particular reason the EC used to justify the importance of Royals FM's engagement in local governance issues was the non-focused attention the private stations and the GBC were giving to issues of the local Assemblies in the Brong-Ahafo Region. In the view of the EC, Royals FM, as a CR station, had a responsibility to fill that gap. The Director added that the station's Mission Statement indicated under Chapter Four states in essence that Royals FM was established to empower its community members to participate in decision making for equitable development was a fulfilment of the local governance mandate of Royals FM. It would seem that the role played by the station in the governance of the Wenchi Municipal District analysed in the next chapter, is a confirmation of the above claims.

However, evidence gathered from the ground on the community sense of ownership of Royals FM showed this was woefully low. For instance, none of the local level respondents regarded the station as belonging to the Wenchi community. Whilst the FGD participants in the Agubie and Akete could not attribute the station's ownership to any particular person of group of persons, the majority of those in the Wenchi township FGDs perceived that Royals FM was owned by its Executive Director and members of the Wenchi Royals Family that the Executive Director belonged to. The Traditional Ruler Key Informant, on his part, perceived that the owners of Royals FM had established the station to further their commercial and

political agenda. Indeed, this view was found to have influenced the Traditional Ruler's assessments of Royals FM activities on local governance as discussed in the next chapter where he maintained that the station's local governance agenda was being influenced by a political agenda. At one point in the interview with him, he expressed his suspicion as follows:

> When people are to deal with the station on serious political matters, they are thinking of how to deal with the individual owner and not a whole community. And let's face it, whatever agreements the individual owner can reach with the prospective users would be different from a whole community with varied interests. A truly community owned station can take better decisions than an individual (Interview with Traditional Ruler, 18/02/2017).

All these notwithstanding, there was a significant evidence of an appreciation of the station's dedication to development and local governance issue. For instance, the FGD Participants in Wenchi noted that Royals FM was rendering services in ways different from other radio stations. As a participant declared:

> Although we are not sure that Royals is for us all, actually it is working for the interest of the people of the Wenchi District. Since the assembly is to see to our development, Royals talks on issues that are happening in the Wenchi town and the villages nearby every. Indeed, Royals shows consistent interest in the work of the assembly. Without Royals, we won't know what the assembly is doing about our markets and the revenue they collect from the market women. But the station makes us understand some of these issues ... (FGD Participant at Wenchi, 21/2/2017).

A very important point to note is that the data presented above represents a strong pointer to the study participants' desirability for an authentic CR, which for them could serve as a mobilizer of the local community to participate in decision making in its policies and operations.

8.1.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study finding revealed a considerable gap between the expectations and the reality on the ground, in terms of the ownership of Royals FM and the community's participation in management and decision-making. It was discussed under Chapter Four that real community ownership of a radio station ideally stems from the community's involvement in the founding of a station. This starts from conception through to resource mobilization for the station's establishment, and provision for community participation in policy and management (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). When a CR comes into existence through this process, it yields a genuine sense of community ownership. In often situations, this will in turn influence most aspects of the operations of the station. But as was noted, very often CR stations in developing

countries are started in ways that prevent them from being truly community-owned. The dominant forms of this include those founded by a small group of people, individuals and NGOs. Due to the high prevalence of this situation in Africa, when writing on CR in Africa, the Nigerian writer, Ojebode sets out with a declaration that "Not all that claim to be community radio are community radio" (2013:12). Ojebode argues that even though there are truly ideal 'community radio' stations in the continent – conceived, established and owned, and managed by the community and even when these received financial support from outside the community, they remain a truly community project, many of the so-described CR stations are run by the founders with input from the community. Ojebode singles out Radio Ada in Ghana as a shining example of such an authentic CR - fully owned by the community with the management being in the hands of the community to date. However, as noted later in the discussions, the station still misses the highest mark in terms of participatory management.

But this less than ideal model of CR is the case of most CR stations in Ghana, including Royals FM. Several studies conducted on CR in Ghana have touched on the challenges of community ownership and participation (Alumuku, 2007; Ufuoma, 2012). The research findings by Diedong and Naaikuur (2012) and Naaikuur and Diedong (2014) perhaps best capture the situation. Particularly, the 2012 study, which involved seven CR stations selected from across the country, established that, although the CR movement in the country had been able to make some remarkable progress, a key obstacle to achieving success in the consolidation of the gains marked was how to ensure commitments to the core principles that underpin the operations of CR. The study discovered that as compared to the actual situation, the biggest challenge was how to effectively put into practice the involvement of community members in the management of the stations and the creation of a sense of community ownership. In terms of grasping the real concept of CR, there was found to be a wide gap in understanding between the management of CR and community members in whose interest the stations are established. Whereas the management of the CR stations were quick in noting that first and foremost giving voice to the voiceless was the raison d'être of their operations, a deep analysis of the processes, which were essential to carrying out that objective, seemed muddied in the political economy of running CR.

From the above cited studies, the problems of ownership and participation seem to stem from the way CR stations in Ghana are being established. Diedong and Naaikuur's (2012) study found that most of the studied stations, which were part of the founding members of the GCRN, were not founded by their communities in conformity with the traditional model of ownership indicated earlier. Although the NCA's definition of CR cited in the Conceptual Chapter sets down the guidelines that the ownership and control must be vested in community organizations, most of the stations were the initiatives of individuals, families, and church-founded NGOs. A most notable case of a church founded station is Radio Progress, which was founded in the name of the Mass Media for Development, a CBO established by the

Catholic Diocese of Wa for the purposes of establishing the station (Naaikuur, 2003).

In the particular case of Royals FM, the presentation of its profile in Chapter Four revealed that the station was the brainchild of an individual member of the Wenchi community, who founded it as a commercial radio but later converted it into a community-oriented one. Although Myers (2008) agrees with Ojebode cited above that this model is part of the norm and not an exception in Africa, where CR stations are founded in ways that prevent them from being authentic community stations, the author proposes that such stations can evolve into truly community-owned ones. Accordingly, this can be done through the transfer of ownership to communities, which would essentially include providing structures for broad-based community participation. Contrary to Myer's suggestion, in the case of Royals FM there was little evidence found to suggest that the conversion from a commercial station to a community-oriented one had been accompanied by clear community ownership arrangements. The station was found to have remained closely associated with its founder who had been the Executive Director from the date of establishment. It was therefore to be expected that a section of the findings indicated earlier would attribute Royals FM's ownership to the founder.

Ghana's situation is unsurprising given the fact that, as indicated under Chapter One, CR had remained little known in the country until the coming into being of the first stations and the subsequent establishment of the GCRN. The Communication Expert Key Informant in an interview suggested that an outcome of this situation was that when it became possible to establish CR in the country, there was no real movement for its development or social groups that actually campaigned for that kind of broadcasting system. The Expert added that it would appear that a few people, notably academicians, who knew about the concept, did not make it a case to sensitize communities on ways to establish truly-community owned stations. This brings to the fore the relevance of Buckley's (2011) suggestion that the existence of civil society based advocacy groups and representative associations that promote community media development, is a vital ingredient to establishing an enabling environment that supports and encourages community media to establish and to grow. In the absence of such a condition in Ghana at the birth of CR, it seems the individuals who have volunteered to invest in establishing the CR stations feel they have filled a gap that would have existed in the CR sector in the pluralistic broadcasting environment in Ghana. They draw a sense of fulfilment from the fact that the stations are broadcasting in the interest of the communities.

Another possible consideration that perhaps influenced the above approach to the establishment of CR in Ghana is the fact that the initial start-up costs of a building, broadcasting equipment and antenna can be far beyond the resources of a community in Ghana. Perhaps because of this assumption, these founders sought funding independently but purportedly in the name of their communities. Regardless of the poverty of the community, however, a major effort should have been made to raise money in the community from the people. This could range from

traditional fund-raising activities such as raffles, festivals, contests or any other way that everybody can give something however small and feel that they are "owners" of this radio. In fact, Gumucio-Dagron (2001) in a report, *Making Waves*: Global Experiences of Grassroots Participatory Communication, Gumucio-Dagron found that poor people were often willing to make in-kind donations like grains and livestock to support CR stations. It is unclear if these options were or are being explored in Ghana's context; what is clear is that the traditional definition of CR has hardly been the case in Ghana.

On the management dimension, it was argued in the Conceptual Chapter that community ownership often goes with democratic management. At the minimum, the community should vote into office members of their station's governing councils who would rule for a set tenure of office with clear replacement requirements for the members; and there should be periodic change of the board members. To this end, tenure of office will be set (usually from 3 to 4 years) to facilitate the change (Vanzyl, 2009). The regular change is a crucial measure, not only to ensure that the board of directors and management of the stations are responsible and accountable to the communities, but it also prevents monopoly of the portfolios in CR stations' policy-making bodies. The wisdom behind safeguarding against the monopoly, according to Fairchild (2001), is that an overstaying board of a CR station may feel at liberty to do what they like with the radio and are often not prepared to involve other key players in the community in the project. In the view of Fairchild, when that situation is allowed to happen, depending on how the process is handled, the result is sometimes one of bitterness and sadness from people who want to be part and parcel of the radio but feel excluded.

However, Bosch (2014) reports of power entrenchment of the board of directors of many CR stations. Diedong and Naaikuur's studies cited above found this as the dominant feature in Ghana's CR. In almost all the stations that were studied, EC members were neither elected nor changed and even though most of the stations had founding constitutions, there were no indications in them on the need to change the ECs. Even Radio Ada, often cited as the model CR in Ghana was found to be closely associated with two of the founders who were most catalytic in the process, a married couple who had retired from UNESCO as consultants on CR. The couple, Alex and Wilna Quarmyne, have remained members of the EC of Radio for the over twenty years of the station's life. In addition, there were no democratic processes to involve community members and there were no general meetings open to community members.

More worryingly the studies that were interested in assessing the knowledge levels of the ECs on the principles of CR and their policy making functions revealed that most of the EC members interviewed still knew very little about the organizations and the very policies they were to implement, even though they had stayed so long on the ECs. It was unclear if board members understood the roles board members of CR stations should play and the responsibilities they should shoulder. The workers tended to know more about the organizations than their ECs. This ironic state of

affairs undermines the effectiveness or efficiencies of these ECs in formulating and implementing good policies for their stations, and in solving problems that arise from the operations of the stations.

On the part of the community members, the study found that most of them did not even know the members of the boards who had been hand-picked by the founders of CR. More than ninety per cent of the interviewees understood democratic management and ownership of CR as the capacity of the radio station to give them information on issues relating to agriculture, education, health, culture, and politics and serving as a channel for them to make important social and public announcements. However, the few community members who clearly understood the concept of CR expressed misgivings about the ownership and management of CR. Whilst some of them were calling for functional systems to be put in place to facilitate regular changes in the membership to the ECs of their community stations, which they considered was vital in giving practical meaning to the democratic management principle, others were wondering if there were legal systems put in place that they could resort to in order to effect changes in the prevailing trend.

But such legal actions are not feasible in Ghana as there are no regulatory requirements of boards to be accountable to the communities they serve. The absence of such a legal requirement relates to the need for a regulatory framework for the development of broadcasting in the country that is taken up in detail in the various sections of this chapter. Suffice it to underscore here that the near-protestations by the study respondents on the monopolization of the CR stations' ECs was an unequivocal indication that not only whole sections of the communities did not participate in the stations and felt their views were not taken into consideration but these expressions were a sign of mistrust in the running of the stations.

At Royals FM, there were found to be no structures for community participation and accountability to local communities. Notably, contrary to the principle of community participation in the election of a CR station's board of directors, further probes in the Key Informant interviews and in community-level FGDs revealed a very weak understanding of the participatory management dimension of the ownership principle. Almost all the FGD Participants did not know that, as a CR station, the EC should have been elected and replaced by the community members. They did not even know there was an EC for the station, let alone knowing its members. Indeed, interviews with the Executive Director and the EC Member Key Informant confirmed that the handpicked EC members, who started the radio, had remained unchanged, safe a deceased member, who had been replaced.

Many authorities on CR, including Ojebode (2013), draw attention to several perils in a CR station that is not truly community owned. Key among the risks is the capability of eroding the very sense of community ownership and empowerment that a CR seeks to foster. Diedong and Naaikuur's study cited point concurred with Ojebode's view by asserting that when community ownership is questionable, it can

affect public trust and credibility in a CR station. In the case of Royals FM, two most significant indicators of this appeared to be a feeling of non-participation in the station's key policy decisions on local governance and sustainability challenges.

On the former, contrary to the Executive Director's claims indicated earlier to the effect that Royals FM had derived mandate from its community to prioritize the station's engagement in the governance issues of their District Assembly through their purported participation in the process of the formulation of the GCRN's Programming Code, these were refuted by the data gathered from the community level interviews and FGDs. There was little evidence that showed that the community felt involved in any such policy level decision-making. Indeed, it was intriguing to discover that most participants in the three FGDs were unaware of the station's Mission Statement and the GCRN's Programming and Non-Partisanship Codes that articulated the roles of CR stations in the local governance system of Ghana. No policy document on local governance formulated by the EC as directed by the GCRN as indicated earlier was found. Following from the above, although several participants in this study praised Royal FM as championing socio-economic uplifting of their communities via the organization of programmes and services differentiating them from other radio stations, it seems the station could have done much better in its local governance endeavours than discussed in the next chapter with the community involvement. Besides, the ownership question appeared to have undermined the credibility of the station's local government promotion agenda. Notably, there was an indication of a lingering feeling among a significant section of the study respondents that the accountability programmes, as discussed in the next chapter, were driven by some politically partisan agenda.

On the sustainability angle, it was underscored in the Conceptual chapter that a strong indicator of the social sustainability of CR is when a CR station has stability in its volunteer services. Virtually all writers on CR's sustainability call attention to the fact that, in a community that feels closely connected to the ownership of a station, it is not difficult to find volunteers who would like to offer their skills and talents to the radio station. However, my study found that a major challenge to sustainability of Royals FM was how to retain its workforce. According to the Executive Director, many volunteers and full-time workers, including two accountants and a secretary had already left in 2017 alone. The most worrying aspect of the problem was the constant poaching of the station's on-air staff by commercial stations. During my data collection period at the station, I witnessed the Head of Programmes making arrangement to leave the station to work with a commercial station in another town. In frantic efforts to stop him from leaving, the Executive Director proposed doubling his allowances. The Executive Director alleged that it was the third time in the year he had had to make such efforts to keep the particular worker. Since he was the lead producer of station's the flagship programmes, the Programmes Head departure would definitely affect the local governance programmes negatively.

Even though the drifting of CR workers to commercial stations is a developing world-wide phenomenon (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Ojebode, 2013), Alex and Wilna Quarmyn cited earlier, have lamented about the constant poaching of CR stations' staff by commercial stations in Ghana. They note that many volunteers sign up as volunteers with the expectation that when they become good at the job, they would be paid a salary. When it does not turn out as expected, with the training they have had through CR training effort, they have to seek employment in commercial radio stations. In their words, "Very often, if the person is good on air, he doesn't need to seek employment elsewhere; the commercial stations actually come and poach him from the community station" (Alex & Wilna, 2013:34). What this means is that CR stations need to do constant training of new volunteers and as the training costs money, it adds to the financial burdens of the stations.

Even those volunteers who stay with community stations are not committed due to the principles of service to their communities. For example, Diedong's and Naaikuur's study cited above found that, although the volunteer producers interviewed in their study indicated above said they came to work at the stations because they loved their communities and wanted to serve them, when deeper level questions were raised about how they could reconcile their disappointments with the low allowances given them and the spirit of voluntarism, they seemed to be at a loss as to what to say.

It is worth highlighting the point on the negative impact of the low sense of community ownership and the ineffective participation on CR as an important theme that has attracted scholarly attention (see Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Urgoiti, 2012; Hussain, 2008). Particularly for Africa, perhaps Lush and Urgoiti's (2012) study on community broadcasting in Namibia perhaps best illustrates the situation. They report that in nine community stations, most boards of the stations were unelected and that there was an absence of regulatory requirements on boards accountability to the communities. Lush and Urgoiti found that it was a source of a widespread mistrust within the communities of stations.

For this study, situating the discussions on the issues of ownership and participation and their effects on CR within regulatory and legal framework can be helpful in addressing the related challenges. Several key studies on the importance of a legal framework on broadcasting development especially in transition countries, with focus on CR (see for example, Buckley et al., 2008; Price-Davies & Tacchi, 2001; Buckley, 2011) have emphasized that it does not only provide mechanisms for monitoring the activities of broadcasters in a country to ensure that, in serving their respective mandates, they serve the public interests; but, more importantly, it creates an enabling environment for the growth of community broadcasting in a country. In a document titled *Community Media: Good Practice Handbook* (2011) compiled and edited by Buckley (2011) that discusses the importance of an enabling environment for community media development, clear and explicit legal recognition of community broadcasting as a distinct sector, and a support system for community broadcasting sustainability, have been underlined as core elements of a broadcasting

law for an enabling environment. In countries with clear laws on CR, adherence to the core principles of CR, including community-ownership and participatory democratic management are provided for. For instance, a study by Price-Davies and Tacchi titled, *Community Radio in a Global Context: A Comparative Analysis* that compares the legal and regulatory frameworks for community radio in Australia, Canada, France, Holland, Ireland and South Africa recommends the importance of legislating on the ownership and management of CR. It states:

> Community management and ownership of stations must be an established aspect of legislation … so that stations maintain both their relevance to and control by the communities they serve rather than outside interests … Management of the stations should be the responsibility of a representative body, which draws its membership from across the community being served (Price-Davies & Tacchi, 2002:6).

Almost all the countries involved in the study were found to have laws on community ownership and management. In Australia and Holland, respectively, for example, the study cited the legal provisions as follows: CR stations are defined as:

> … having organizational mechanisms for active community participation in management, development and operations; being controlled and operated by an autonomous body which is representative of the community served ((Price-Davies & Tacchi, 2002:51).

and

> … must be formally incorporated. The board of the station has to reflect the local community and be representative of the major cultural, social, religious, and ideological organizations in the local community (Price-Davies & Tacchi, 2002:51).

In addition, Vanzyl (2009) reports that in South Africa a law states that: "a CR station must be owned and controlled by an elected board, which is representative of all sectors of the community" (Vanzyl, 2009:12). Buckley (2011) found that Benin has a regulatory system on the management of CR in the country where management committees with executive powers must comprise representatives of the local community drawn from community organizations, women groups and other organizations. The committees stay in office for a period not beyond three years.

However, as noted earlier in Chapter One, Ghana still lacks a functional broadcasting law (BL) to regulate the sector. Since the early 2000, there has been a consistent advocacy from various quarters including civil society groups, local communities and academia for a broadcasting law to be put in law. This has pushed for the drafting of a Broadcasting Bill in 2003. The Bill has gone through many amendments until it was presented to Parliament in 2014 for passage into law.

When passed into an Act (Law), it will provide a framework for the NMC and the NCA to formulate policies for the broadcasting sector in a manner consistent with the Constitution and in the interest of the people of Ghana (see Revised Broadcasting Bill, 2014).

Expectedly, the delay in the passage of the Broadcasting Bill has been of concern to many analysts of the country's media scene, who have blamed the legal void for the current numerous challenges bedevilling broadcasting in the country (Buckley et al., 2005; Blay-Amihere, 2016; Ayeboafo, 2019). According to these observers, governments have been unenthusiastic towards the BL for political reasons. Among others, the Law will constrain the interests of the political elites such as their restricted access to broadcasting authorization (Broadcasting Bill, 2014). As made evident in Chapters Eight and Nine, the lack of legislation has made possible monopolization of broadcasting by politicians, a situation that has nurtured a highly politically polarized broadcasting scene in Ghana.

Obviously owing to the absence of a BL, there are no requirements that compel adherence to the core principles of CR such as requirements on CR's accountability to the communities as means of generating the trust necessary for sustainability. In a broader sphere, as the World Bank's Report of 2005 by Buckley et al.,(2005) has expressed concern, the CR sector is not recognized in law as a distinct type of broadcasting. Although the NCA does so in practice and the NMC National Media Policy and National Telecommunications Policy recognize CR as a distinct type of broadcasting, the NCA has no clear criteria and has been arbitrary in decisions on CR. For example, CR is not recognized in the NCA Act and its frequency authorization process is not essentially different from that of private commercial radio. Happily, the Broadcasting Bill recognizes CR broadcasting. Clause 25 to 31 is on community broadcasting, defined in clause 25 "as a broadcasting service provided for a marginalised community by a radio or television station where the ownership and management are representative of the community" (Broadcasting Bill, 2015:24).

It is important that the BL in the offing formulates policies for authentic CR stations that meet best standard practices cited above. Such a system is crucial in injecting public confidence in CR in the country.

8.2. THE NON-PROFIT CHARACTER OF COMMUNITY RADIO AS AN ADVANTAGE

Chapter Five underscored that a key constraint to the ability of the media to serve the public interests, including the promotion of good governance for development, is its dependence on commercial interest (Price & Raboy, 2002; Buckley et al., 2005). For instance, when public service in the developing countries tend to adopt commercial means, as is often the case, such as sale of air time on their services due to economic difficulties faced their countries, the practice impacts negatively on their public service operations (Price & Raboy, 2002). Thus, it is for setting public

service broadcasting free from financial control by any entity and to enable it maintain a large degree of editorial and operating independence so as to be able to meet the important communication needs of society and citizens, that this system is to be financed legally with public funding (see McQuail, 2011).

But the GBC has found itself in a reality of being funded through sale of air time on its services in addition to the direct government subvention through the Ministry of Information. Buckley et al., (2005) cited earlier suggests that the sale of air time has impacted negatively on the GBC's public service operations as commercial interest in programming has grown over the years against other programmes. The report further observes that TV licence fees collected by the GBC and meant to cushion the corporation from direct government funding has not been successful as the fee is rather low, the equivalent of US $0.30 per year as at that time and Parliament had been reluctant to have it increased. Even though Parliament in recent years has raised the TV licence fee to about $ 5.50, there has been difficulty in collecting the fees due to public reluctance to pay. The competition from the private commercial stations compounds the situation financial difficulties of the national broadcaster. The overall consequence of the state of affairs is that the GBC is constrained financially in the performance of its public service role.

McQuail (2012) notes that since the private media are very often established to serve commercial interests, they cannot be relied upon to serve the public interest. However, Buckley et al. (2008) argue that private commercial broadcasting may be subjected to public service requirements in relation to content and coverage where they can be expected to hold a dominant position in the market. Even though the writers note that such requirements should be designed only to further their public service objectives and should not be disproportionate in scope such that they threaten the viability of the service, their proposal is a call for the establishment of regulatory requirements that spell out the public service function of the private broadcasters. Where such public service requirements are absent the consequence is what Fleming (2001) and other analysts, term commercial broadcasters neglect of the public interest. Typically, commercial broadcasters subordinate programmes that are of educational nature, and those targeting economically marginalized communities, in favour of those that can rake in profits. In another dimension, when there is no enabling environment for the establishment and growth for community broadcasting, commercial broadcasting services are concentrated in the commercially viable towns and cities while neglecting the economically marginalized areas.

Community broadcasting, distinguished by its non-profit and communal ownership, is to be safeguarded from getting overwhelmed with commercial imperatives and losing its community-service orientation (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Buckley, 2011). Because of its communal ownership with no individual owners or shareholders to share profits the community-owners collectively decide on how to use its excess resources. Extra resources left after meeting vital operational costs, are usually ploughed back into strengthening programming, renewing equipment, among others

(AMARC, 1998). From the data, the not-for-profit aspect of CR emerged as another strong advantage of CR over the other types of radio in Ghana in the media role in promoting local governance. This sub-chapter is, therefore, dedicated to discussing these findings.

8.2.1 FINDINGS

There was controversy among the respondents on their understanding of the non-profit concept of CR and how they associated it with Royals FM's good governance role. Those who understood the concept and associated it with Royals FM work on local governance, included the two Assembly members, the Communication Expert, the GCRN's Lead Training Facilitator, the PM of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly interviews and the FGD participants in the Agubie village. Those on the other side were the FGD participants in the Wenchi town and the Akete village.

For the Assembly persons, Royals FM adherence to a non-profit ethos was evident during DA elections when aspiring assembly members were given free air time for their campaigns, and in its several other local programmes financed by the station. When one sees the discussions in the next major chapter, which focuses on the governance programmes broadcast by the station, the Assembly members' submissions can be better appreciated. The Agubie village FGD participants expressed similar views by pointing to the environmental campaign programmes indicated under the Study Methodology chapter of which their community was a beneficiary. A member declared as follows:

> But for Royals FM, the illegal timber logging would have depleted our environment and the loggers would have taken over our farmlands ... our major source of livelihood. Royals FM intervened, not only to stop the illegal activities, but even to get us compensation. Royals did all that for us without charging us any money. Is it not wonderful for a radio station in Ghana to do that? (FGD Participant in Agubie Village, 17/02/2017).

For the PM of the Assembly, Royals FM, due to its non-commercial commitments, was doing a lot of services for the Assembly for free. He mentioned in particular that the Assembly did not have to pay for air time for public campaigns on revenue mobilization and for inviting the Assembly members for their general meetings campaigns, apart from the numerous programmes on the activities of the Assembly. To the PM:

> The Assembly would always be owing the station a lot of money for announcements if it was charging us for the announcements. We get free time from the station ... In fact we have a cordial relationship with Royals. (Interview with the PM of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly, 19/02/2017)

The PM said further that Royals FM was doing similar services to other state institutions, including the police service.

On his part, the Traditional Ruler recalled free announcements Royals FM was making for the Traditional Council in terms of mobilizing the people in the villages for meetings at the chief's palaces and for communal labour and noted that, before Royals came into being, the chiefs had relied on a traditional method of beating an instrument known as the 'gong-gong' to summon their citizens. "Nowadays Royals has come to replace the gong-gong" (Interview with Traditional Ruler, 18/02/2017). The Traditional Ruler therefore saw Royals as a partner and contributor to the traditional governance system that was complimenting the Wenchi Assembly in community development.

The non-profit status of CR in Ghana is enshrined in what is known as the GCRN Revenue Generation Code, which enjoins the member stations to render such community services as was done by Royals FM. The Code prohibits the sharing of profits in accordance with the Companies Code of Ghana, under which CR stations in the country are required to register as Companies Limited by Guarantee. The Revenue Generation Code states:

> ... a CR station shall not retain any surplus for the benefit of any individual or group. Excess of revenue over expenditure, if any, shall be ploughed back towards enhancing the capacity of the station to serve its community (GCRN's Revenue Code, 2010:5).

The above responses can be interpreted to imply that the non-profit orientation of CR that enjoined Royals FM to provide community services is a call on CR to champion local governance issues as an integral part of the social services. The central point is that the surplus income re-investment can be directed towards local governance programming if that area is defined as a priority area in the operations of a CR. My Key Informant Communication Expert alluded to this supposition. He argued that, since commercial radio stations typically design their programmes to attract advertising they would normally have limited interests in the pursuit of local governance issues unless there is some financial or other gains attached to them. In his view community stations, on the other hand, would invest money in such programmes if local governance is prioritized in policy.

This view was re-echoed by the GCRN's Lead Training Facilitator:

> As the GCRN members are committed to a community service ethos, they provide services whether or not those services bring in money or not. Local governance issues do not bring money to the stations; the stations rather spend money on local governance programmes. The stations give free airtime for local governance programmes and send the reporters to communities to report on local governance issues. Do you think the

> commercial radio stations will do these things? (Interview with GCRN's Leader Trainer, 29/02/2017).

The local governance programmes presented in the next chapter will provide ample proof of Royals FM investment in local governance issues. But, in the meantime, it is important at this point to call attention to the fact that, beyond local governance, the GCRN stations have demonstrated commitments to national level governance issues. This includes civic education and the allocation of free airtime to political parties during general elections. Beginning with the first general elections in 2000 through to the 2016 one, member stations of the GCRN had always provided free air time on an equal basis to the various political parties in their catchment areas in the final campaign quarter immediately before the general election (GCRN Election Code, 2000). Except in the 2012 elections when the stations received support from STAR-Ghana, a civil society fund dedicated to Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness, the support for parties had always been without any external assistance (GCRN Political Parties Manifestoes, 2006)

For commercial radio stations, such elections time is seen as golden opportunities for raising their revenues by charging for the use of the airtime. As my Communication Expert Informant joked:

> Election times in Ghana are generally considered by commercial broadcasters as harvest seasons. So why would they give free airtime to political parties. Some of them will rather double the charges for the airtime for certain parties. Community radio stations act as good political Samaritans especially to the poor parties when they give free airtime to these parties (Interview with Communication Expert, 28/02/2017).

8.2.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Contrary to the positive appreciation of Royals FM's non-profit operations, including those on local governance promotion expressed by the majority of the respondents above, clear evidence of misunderstandings of the non-profit concept and suspicions of the station's non-adherence to the principle emerged on the part of some of the community level respondents. These were participants in the Wenchi town and in the Akete village FGDs. While the majority of the FGD participants in the Wenchi FGDs acknowledged that Royals FM social services described above, were in fulfilment of its non-profit mandate, a few questioned the station's adherence to the non-profit principle. The beef of the latter was specifically related to the station carrying advertising and paid for announcements, which they could not reconcile with the non-profit ethos of CR. A participant queried, "If Royals FM is non-profit, and why should we hear advertisements from the traders every day? Is it not making money?"

Taken on its face value, the above question suggested that the broadcasting of commercials by a CR station like Royals FM was a mere illegality. But a deeper

level view would link the feelings expressed to the principle of CR's financial accountability to the community that calls for public disclosure of excess income. Scholars such as Lush and Urgoito (2012) and Buckley (2011) stress on the need for legal requirements to be instituted to ensure not only the public disclosure, but also con-compliance with the principle of reinvesting surplus income of CR. Lush and Urgoito mention Denmark as an example where regulations require stations to present their financial statements to general meetings that are open to community members noting that such public accountability generates trust that, in turn, attracts support from the community and other funders. Obviously, where there are no such laws, there is a high risk of compromising the principle; such was the case at Royals FM, where there was no evidence of financial transparency and accountability to the community at Royals FM.

Another dimension of the disagreements over Royals FMs adherence to the non-profit principle contains two inter-related issues, namely; a clear misunderstanding of the principle, and the ownership questions discussed earlier. Naaikuur (2003) calls attention to the likelihood of such controversies arising by warning that when community members are not made to understand in full the implications of the non-profit concept, they would misconstrue it to mean that all services provided to community members should be done without any request for financial payments. In such cases, some community members of a CR station, might question the legitimacy of trying to run the organization in a business-like manner, thinking that, after all, it is meant to provide a service and should not make profit. According to Naaikuur (2003), the misunderstanding can run deeper and may even assume undesired dimensions when the ownership of the station is not really in the hands of the community, which is typical of most of the CR stations in Ghana as discussed earlier. The lack of sense of ownership is what often leads to the suspicion that some so-called owners of a station are using it as a ruse to enrich themselves at the expense of the community. This situation is avoidable largely when community members are involved right from the beginning of the project, making them understand the not-for-profit status and see the import of other principles of community radio.

The point to drive home here is that the misunderstanding on the non-profit concept and the controversy around Royals FM's adherence to the principle was found to have influenced perceptions on the station's local governance engagement. Whilst the majority of the respondents in the Wenchi FGDs praised Royals FM for the social services indicated above, and in view of the local governance programmes discussed in the next chapter, almost all the participants in the Akete village FGDs forthrightly expressed their dissatisfaction with the stations performance in that sense and suggested that much more could have been done if the non-profit principle was applied to the letter. A participant alleged as follows:

> Anytime we invited the station to report on our problems to get the attention of the district assembly, we were told there was no money to come here. Sometimes we are told that if we could give money to the

> radio workers to fuel their motorbikes or take a car to come to our area, they would come. Yet we hear a lot of announcements and advertisements on the station every day. Where does that money go to? (Participant in FGD in Akete village, 18/02/2017).

The question in the quotation implied that if the money from the commercials from the station was dedicated to serving the needs of the community, there would not have been such complaints of lack of money to visit some parts of the community. But it was unsurprising that the complaint came from that community because, as indicated in the Study Methodology and in the next chapter, the Akete village was identified as one of the outlying communities from that was never visited by Royals FM in its outreach programmes.

Be that as it may, it is important to note here, that such negative perceptions can undermine public confidence and trust in CR, a situation that goes to affect the community's perception on the value of station's contribution to the society. This situation was signalled in Royals FM's context, where in spite of the appreciative record in community service expressed by a significant section of the study respondents, the minority critical voices could not be discounted as irrelevant. The mixed perceptions about Royals FM's adherence to a non-profit ethos coupled with the station's financial non-accountability to the community, is a clear indication that the station could not rely on the community for financial support. When combined with the community ownership deficits discussed earlier that were found to be eroding the station's social accountability, it means Royals FM was suffering both social and financial sustainability. The negative impact of Royals FM's financial challenges, were found to be enormous, but the most pertinent one to point out here is that, apart from the difficulty in retaining its critical staff as discussed earlier, the seeming unavailability of sufficient funding for the station's outreach programmes on local governance, was re-echoed in almost all the radio station's interviews and discussion. This theme has been discussed in detail in the next chapter.

My study posits that a BL can contribute significantly to financial sustainability of CR in Ghana in two main ways. In the first place, Clause 30(1) of the Broadcasting Bill states that "community broadcasting service shall invest all the revenue earned from its operations in the community broadcasting service". As the GCRN's Revenue Code indicated earlier is not a national law and cannot compel member stations to adhere to the principle, the accountable and transparent use of surplus financial income of CR stations in the country can be questionable. In effect, a BL should provide specific requirements for the CR stations to adhere to the provision of resource surplus reinvestments. This will be sufficient to generate public financial accountability as a measure for public trust in the non-profit status of the community stations.

In the second aspect, the Broadcasting Bill provides for public funding for broadcasting in the country. Clause 71 of the Broadcasting Bill provides for the establishment of a fund to be known as the National Broadcasting Development

Fund. To be administered by the Commission, the objectives of the Fund "include promotion of the overall development of the broadcasting sector and supporting national public service broadcasting. Funding of community broadcasting services are provided for in clauses 85. Public funding has been a guaranteed source of community broadcasting in many countries (Price-Davies & Tacchi, 2001; Buckley, 2011). Buckley (2011) reports on this in Denmark, France and South Africa. While Denmark draws on a part of the licence fee collected from households to support the public and community broadcasting systems, France has an established support fund for local non-commercial broadcasters that are based on a levy of commercial broadcasters. South Africa has a mixed model with contributions from both private and public broadcasters to a fund that supports community broadcasting. In Price-Davies and Tacchis's study cited earlier, all the six countries have public funding mechanisms for CR.

It is needless to state that such public funding for CR would reduce the challenges of financial unsustainability, which is about the thorniest issue of CR in the developing countries like Ghana. Where local governance is a priority, the public funding would contribute to making a significant positive impact on the local governance functions of CR.

8.3. THE NON-PARTISANSHIP STATUS OF COMMUNITY RADIO AS AN ADVANTAGE

The Empirical chapter of this study called attention to the fact that a crucial condition under which the media is enabled to play its good governance function effectively is when it is independent of political controls and influences. It was underscored there that media systems that are close to political powers end up becoming machineries for government propaganda and the pursuit of partisan interests of politicians. That is why in many developing countries, Africa included where media neutrality from the political agenda of government and politicians are often in doubt (Hyden et al., 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2005), the abilities of the mainstream media to pursue the public interests, has often been questioned.

In Ghana, concerns have been widely expressed about the politically partisan nature of the country's media and its socio-political consequences. Even though the public media, including the GBC are constitutionally protected from government control and are supposed to be dedicated to serving the public good, including promoting governance accountability, their financial dependence on government, a situation discussed earlier, presents a potential affront to this independence. For the private media, especially broadcasting, the roots of the problem have often been traced to a perceived concentration of ownership of both the press and the broadcast media in the hands of politicians. For instance, a former Chairman of the NMC observed, Kabral Blay-Amihere observed that most of the private-commercial radio stations located across the country are owned by politicians who marshal political patronage when their respective parties are in power, to acquire the broadcast licences. He expressed worry that the owners of these stations seem to have limited interests in using them to

promote the public good apart from the pursuit of their parochial partisan interests. Being a Former Chairman, Blay-Ahmihere was speaking on the issue.

The NCA, in its role as a manager of the broadcasting spectrum has often been accused of contributing to the undesirable politicization of radio in the country. For instance, speaking on the topic, Media, Hate Speech and Peaceful Elections in Ghana in an event organized by the MFWA in 2016 to deliberate on emerging issues of hate speech in campaign communication, in the run up to the pending General Elections that year, a Former Chairman of the NMC, Kabral Blay-Amihere, accused the NCA of underhand dealings in the allocation of broadcast licences. He alleged that:

> ... there is no transparency so they just allocate the frequencies and most of them are political owners who set up the radio station for a single purpose. If you look at some of the people who have been given frequencies, you will wonder when they saw the press as a medium for business. So, this is where we are today. Political ownership is the cause of most of the problems (Blay-Amihere, Ghanaweb, 21st July, 2016).

It is unsurprising that these lapses and loopholes in the work of the NCA will create potential opportunities for politicians to monopolize broadcasting in the country and against the public interests. Analysts have decried the negative socio-political and ethical activities of these political radio stations. For example, the current President of the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA), Afail Monny, in an interview with the GBC radio on Tuesday 8th August, 2018, on the state of the media, lamented on how most of the partisan radio stations were promoting sensationalism, political propaganda, ethnic and religious incitements on the airwaves. In addition, a renowned communication scholar, Professor Karikari, has on several occasions pointed out the ramifications of the state of media political polarization. For example, when he delivered a public lecture in 2013, organized by the CSO, the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG) on the theme: *The Ghanaian Media: National Peace and Cohesion*, the Professor observed that the growing involvement of political party activists in radio ownership tended to suffocate the airwaves with programmes outputs on the doings of the political partisan groups. He further noted how, principally for political ends, the airwaves were saturated with personal attacks and insults, character assignation, unsubstantiated allegations, intemperate language, fabrication of information, abject lies and generally expressions that result in political polarization and disaffection.

Obviously this politically charged media situation creates an intimidating atmosphere and discourages many people from participating in public debates, thereby, imposing censorship on many sections of society. It, not only undermines the development of democratic culture and sustenance of democratic institutions, but also creates recipe for the misuse of broadcasting for purposes dangerous for political stability and democratic order.

The Conceptual chapter of the study presents CR as an alternative to the politically controlled media systems and underlined its non-partisan ethos. By this, CR should owe no allegiance to any political interest. This principle makes it possible for CR to be dedicated to the public good and devoid of the pursuit of any parochial interests (Buckley et al., 2008; Buckley, 2011). It is partly due to this non-partisan interest of CR that the introductory part of Chapter One of this study presented the medium as a favourable tool for the promotion of a good governance agenda in developing countries.

The NCA's definition of CR quoted in the Conceptual Chapter clearly captures the non-partisan character of CR in Ghana. This sub-section is dedicated to examining the study findings that relate to respondents' understandings of the CR non-partisanship, and how those influenced their perceptions on its role in Ghana's local governance.

8.3.1. FINDINGS

A significant part of the data did not only indicate that stakeholders understood the non-partisan orientation of CR, and perceived that by the non-partisanship of the medium, it was uniquely positioned to champion a good governance agenda for Ghana's local governance system than other media. In the case of Royals FM, the data suggested divided opinions on the stations adherence to a non-partisan ethos.

It was found that the GCRN had put in place several Codes of Conduct to insulate member stations and their workers from falling prey to the politically partisan media environment in Ghana. My checks found three of the codes. These are the GCRN Election Code, the GCRN Non-Partisanship Code and the GCRN Programming Code. The main purpose of the Election Code that had been adopted by GCRN Member stations since the 2004 General Elections in Ghana was to guide the conduct of CR workers during electioneering times so that not only the stations were non-partisan, but that the workers were also seen to be non-partisan. It stipulates, among other things that CR workers were not to:

- support any political party or candidate publicly;
- take the side of any political party or candidate in any public discussion;
- show bias, positive or negative, towards any political party or candidate;
- hold any key position or office in any political party or campaign organization;
- mount a political campaign platform;
- ride in any vehicle that is clearly marked as a political campaign vehicle*;*
- accept any favours, financial or in kind, from any political party or candidate;
- use political party or campaign identification, e.g. t-shirts, stickers, colours;

- discuss party or campaign politics at the station except for professional reasons; or
- send messages on the air to any political party or campaign supporters.

In an interview with the GCRN's Lead Training Facilitator, he revealed that it had become imperative to put in place the Election Code because of heightened sensitivities in election years and that, because CR Radio Workers were also members of their communities, extra measures were needed to ensure they were seen as non-partisan in their work. The Lead Trainer further noted that, indeed, most of the GCRN's member stations had experienced attempts to influence them politically during electioneering periods by functionaries of the local branches of various national political parties, who tried to induce their most popular producers and presenters to use the airwaves of CR stations to boost the fortunes of their parties at the expense of their competitors. These claims have been supported by further revelations in the next sub-section.

The GCRN attached utmost seriousness to adherence to the principles of the Elections Code, and promptly invoked relevant sanctions to match any breaches. For instance, when the member stations had been directed to terminate the appointment of any of their workers who declared intentions to contest in national level elections or demonstrated partisan tendencies, a Member of Parliament in the current government, who worked with Radford F.M in the Sissala East District of the Upper West Region, was made to relinquish his talk-show host after he declared his intentions to contest for elections on the ticket of the NPP in the 2016 General Elections. Lead operants of the CR stations such as the Managers and ECs Members were likewise to resign from their positions in GCRN stations if they were found in similar situations.

The Non-partisanship Code is perhaps the most crucial of the GCRN's codes to this study. It was put in place to specifically safeguard the stations from being drawn into what has been observed as a deeply politically polarized local governance system in Ghana. The Code states in part that:

> In particular, they shall promote mutual co-operation towards the non-partisan pursuits of effective decentralization that is equitable and driven by community participation. In this regard, District Assemblies may be further sensitized to the central need for Community Radio stations to maintain their independence for this objective to be achieved (GCRN Non-partisanship Code, 2014:4).

The Code was inspired by studies that showed that a major factor militating against effective community participation in Ghana's local governance was the partisanship in the MMDAs, a situation discussed in Chapter Two of this study. The 2014 studies by the GCRN discussed in Chapter Three, found sufficient evidence that the growing partisanship in the country's local governance was constraining the ability of the CR stations to operate fully and freely in the service of their communities.

Respondents in the studies had had experiences to the effect that apart from efforts being made to compromise the non-partisan character of these stations, programming and reportage by CR stations, which were critical of the performance of DAs, MPs or other state institutions were deemed to be politically motivated either in favour of or in opposition to the political agenda of political parties in power. In the words of one respondent:

> People are constantly judging our stations in their listening; they listen to us with political ears to determine whether we are either for, or against one of the two dominant political parties in the country, the NNDC or NPP) (GCRN, Case Studies Report, 2014)

Each of the studied CR stations recounted various reactions from functionaries of the DAs in response to their reportage or programming that was critical of the local Assembly. The Non-Partisanship Code was therefore to help the GCRN stations and their workers to manoeuvre the local partisan environment even as they aspired to promote the development of their district communities.

The Community Radio Programming Code implied a disallowance content syndication from commercial stations as another non-partisanship measure. Article 9 states:

> In keeping with the character of Community Radio and to promote the greatest diversity in broadcasting in the country, the use of syndicated material shall be limited to those produced by other Community Radio stations and development, information and education material from public radio stations (Community Radio Programming Code, 2008:5).

The GCRN's Lead Training Facilitator explained the non-syndication policy to aim to avoid any potential negative influences from the partisan and unethical practices of commercial stations on the community-owned ones. The trainer cited an example where one of the earliest stations to join the Network after it's founding, Radio Dormaa, located in the Brong-Ahafo Region, had been suspended since 2008 by the Network's Executive Council for syndicating content from a commercial station, Peace FM following failure to persuade the station to stop the syndication.

Evidence that the principle of non-partisanship of CR had influence on the perceptions of CR's governance role included claims made by the Lead Training Facilitator who asserted that the non-partisan espousal of GCRN stations imbued the stations with powers to:

> ... investigate corruption in their District Assemblies, whether it is the NPP or NDC government that is in power. This is what the commercial stations cannot do. If an NPP man owns a station in a district, how can that station criticize the District Assembly now that the NPP is in power? (Interview with Lead the Training Facilitator of the GCRN, 23/02/2017).

The Legal Officer from the MLGRD held similar views when he said:

> If you look at the media in Ghana... if you take then GBC that is also at times operating like commercial radio and supporting the government.... if you take a commercial radio that is owned by politician to do the sort of things they do for the politicians, then definitely the answer to promoting local governance in freedom will be through a radio that does not support the government or an individual political future. If that is what CR really stands for, I would go for that... (Interview with Legal Officer at the MLGRD, 28/12/2016).

To the PM of the Wenchi District Assembly:

> Because most of the commercial stations are highly political and openly pursue the political agenda of their owners in their broadcasts and because the GBC is also like a propaganda tool for the government, Ghana needs a different type of radio that can say no to the government and to any politician and do the right thing. From what I know about Royals FM, I think community is this kind of radio (Interview with Presiding Member, Wenchi District Assembly Official, 19/02/2017).

A resounding theme that emerged from across the above responses is that the non-partisan orientation of CR was seen as a strong element that positioned the medium to play a watchdog role over local governance without the fear or favour of any political entity.

8.3.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In spite of GCRN's non-partisanship enjoinment, the study found contradictory perceptions on Royals FM adherence to its non-partisanship in its governance role. Whilst the station level interviews sought to underscore a resolute non-partisan stance maintained by the station towards national and local governance issues, a position the respondents claimed political parties and constitutive members of local government were fully aware of; other respondents thought otherwise.

The EC Chairman of Royals FM articulated the station's strict adherence to the neutrality position eloquently when he declared:

> Wenchi is known to be an NPP support base. Since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992, the NNP has always won the majority votes in the area in the general elections. The current Member of Parliament for the Wenchi Constituency is an NPP man. But if you ask the people in Wenchi, every day Royals FM is calling the District Assembly to answer questions on their work. In general terms, Royals FM creates a level playing ground for all whether they belong to NDC or NPP (Interview with EC Member of Royals FM 20/02/2017).

Being the head of the policy-making body of the station, the EC Chairman's submissions could be taken as credible. Besides, Diedong's and Naaikuur's (2012) study cited in Chapter One touched on an extraordinary demonstration of non-partisanship on the part of Royals FM in the 2008 National Elections, and can be taken as an ample support of the EC's chairman's claims. According to the study, in the Presidential Elections in 2008, the Ghana Electoral Commission (EC) refused to declare a winner in the nation's run-off saying it would have to re-run the elections in the Tain Constituency in the Brong-Ahafo Region in early January 2009. The Tain Constituency, known as the Tain District until 2015, was part of the Wenchi Municipality or constituency. Accordingly, tension mounted and the people depended on Royals FM, considered their mouth-piece, to tell them what to do. The station boldly informed the people not to fear or panic but to vote freely. More importantly, and to the surprise of observers of the heavily polarized media scene during the election period, the station resisted attempts by the parties to influence it with money to broadcast messages to influence the voters. Rather, Royals F.M acted professionally by granting equal airtime to the two political parties for their campaign messages. The outcome was peaceful with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party declared the winner whilst the New Patriotic Party (NPP) boycotted the parliamentary elections. This story would seem to present overwhelming evidence that Royals FM was highly committed to a political neutral status.

However, the counter claims were to the effect that the station was not so independent of partisan influences. For example, the Traditional Ruler Key Informant and one of the Assembly Member for *Droboso* maintained that Royals FM had fallen to partisan influences in some instances. The Traditional Ruler suggested that the station had often shown tendencies of supporting the NNP party during general elections. He pointed out specifically that the station had always favoured the party's Parliamentary Candidates in the allocation of airtime for his campaigns as against a principle of equity to all political parties as indicated under the previous section of this chapter. He further alleged that some of the EC members of Royals FM were hard-core supporters of the NPP, saying he suspected them of subtly influencing the programming of the station in favour of the NPP during national electioneering periods. The Traditional Ruler laid similar claims of compromises regarding Royals FM's performance in local government elections. Although he would not provide specific details, he alleged that some contestants in the DA elections had leveraged familiarity with prominent radio workers to gain undue advantage over their contestants.

Given the status of traditional rulers as custodians of socio-cultural values of Ghana, among which is the upholding of sincerity, and given that the Constitution of Ghana debars chiefs from active partisan politics, it was unlikely that the Traditional Ruler's views were motivated by political, sectional or personal interests. If there could be any doubts expressed about the veracity of his claim, it could stem from dissatisfaction with the monopoly of the EC of the Royals FM by the founding members as discussed earlier in the chapter. The Assembly member from *Doboso*

alleged that Royals FM had shown a bias against him on grounds of his being perceived a loyal supporter of the NDC party. He narrated how he was given a slot on the station for his campaign in the run up to the 2014 DA Elections, only after he had made frantic efforts, whilst the airtime was purportedly allocated free of charge for the DA election campaigns. But the Executive Director of Royals dismissed the veracity of any such partisanship allegations, but conceded that a few EC members and workers with clear affiliations to the NPP party had been tempted by some politicians during the 2016 elections to compromise the non-partisan stance of the station, which they successfully resisted.

Perhaps what can be taken to be an indication of heightened perceptions of Royals FM's alleged partisanship were stories about how the station's workers came under physical and verbal attacks from in the period leading to the 2016 Elections. These were perpetuated by some elements within the community perceived to be supporters of the NDC Party on grounds of the alleged bias against their party. During the FGDs some of the producers and presenters took turns to narrate such incidents.

It is pertinent to note that these experiences of attacks based on the station's perceived political biases are not peculiar to Royals FM. The GCRN's studies cited above, found similar incidents involving other GCRN stations. For example, the study report captured similar stories from a FGD with programme producers and presenters at Radio Builsa in the Sandema District of the Upper East Region. In one of them, the station had reported on a bad bridge on the road to the District capital town. When the station broadcasted on the state of the road indicating that it was a death-trap and blamed it on government negligence, the DCE stormed the station to complain about what he termed a deliberate attempt to tarnish the image of the Assembly and intended to give an advantage to the opponents of the ruling government in coming elections. According to the study report, another CR station, Radford FM in the Sissala East District of the Upper West Region had had its share of such reactions from the DA authorities. The station had tried to hold the Assembly accountable on the general state of underdevelopment in the district. The DCE considered that to be an agenda against the NDC government that was in power and decided to tag the station. The report quoted RADFORD'S FM's Coordinator as follows: "Thenceforth, anything that the station did about the work of the Assembly was seen as being partisan and this led to the withdrawal of various forms of support from the Assembly and the ceasing of all collaborations" (GCRN Case Studies Report, 2014).

Attention has to be called to the fact that the partisan perceptions of Royals FM were found to have pervasively influenced the station's good governance role at the Wenchi Municipal District. At almost every stage of the station's work on local governance discussed in the next chapter, these partisan perceptions surfaced and posed as limiters to the station's potential. This situation was most notable in the implementation of social accountability collaborative activities between the station and local CSOs where the engagements were seen by a section of the local

respondents to have been influenced by a partisan agenda in favour of the NPP party. The partisanship claims and perceptions discussed above being national in scope, the situation casts doubts on the real ability of the GCRN's stations to maintain a non-partisan stance in spite of the above cited Codes. Such difficulties were, indeed, alluded to in an interview with the Communication Expert. Whilst expressing optimism that the non-partisan principle of CR could make community stations in Ghana more favourable tools for local governance engagement than other media systems in the country, he expressed reservation about the ability of CR stations in Ghana to maintain political neutrality at all times. In his opinion:

> If community radio stations in Ghana can really have no allegiance to powerful political interest or to powerful social interest in the community ... if the stations could be so independent, they could best deal with the challenges in the country's local governance system. For example, the DCE or the Chief in a certain community cannot lord it over the radio station by getting the radio station to operate in their interests. From that independent position, the community radio stations can hold the DCE or the local chief accountable to the people. But, I cannot say that all the community radio stations in Ghana cannot pander to the partisan agenda of their founders. There could be these influences at the background that are difficult to find out (Interview with Communication Expert 27/02/2017)

Although the Professor's statements are more of his personal opinion than based on empirical studies, when added to the perceptions of the other respondents, it is plausible to conclude that the GCRN's stations are not free from the partisanship the mainstream media is embroiled.

It is important to note that the struggle by CR to maintain its non-partisan ethos is a global phenomenon. Literature (AMARC, 2007; Jallov, 2012) affirms that one of the greatest struggles of CR all over the world has been how to maintain its independence from political interests. It therefore seems ironical that the more CR stations try to maintain their distance from political influences, the more attractive they become to the politicians. In particular, the literature shows that even though election times can provide sterling opportunities for CR to demonstrate their political neutrality and credibility, they present particular moments that can test their political neutralities to the limits. Fraser and Estrada (2001) note that politicians usually try to exert a lot of pressure on the stations to influence, if not dominate the messages on the stations. Jallov, cited above, writes that CR stations in the developing countries experience such mounting pressures from politicians during election times because the politicians rely on them to reach the majority of illiterate voters largely due to the exclusive use of indigenous languages by the CR stations. Indeed, there have been real instances where some CR stations have fallen victims to partisan influences. For example, Fraser and Estrada (2001) report that in the Philippines, the chairperson of the Managing Organization of a CR, the Community Media Council, was found to have thrown his support behind a favourite political

candidate when elections came and used the station to build up the candidate and downsize the opponent.

Nonetheless, the overly-partisan nature of broadcasting in Ghana is closely linked to the legal void on broadcasting in the country. This view has been backed by analysts such as the current Chairman of the NMC, Yaw Boadu-Ayeboafo, who complained recently about difficulties the Commission encounters in the performance of its duties, which he attributed to the absence of a clear policy backed by a legislative instrument on the electronic media. Addressing journalists at the commissioning of a press centre in the Volta Region, Boadu-Ayeboafo noted that the absence of laws criminalising charlatanism within the electronic media makes it difficult for the NMC to act. The NMC Chairman quipped:

> There are about 400 radio stations and 20 TV stations without any clear policy guideline and that makes the work of the National Media Commission difficult. The Law says nothing is a crime unless it is so enshrined in the laws with a punishment prescribed for it and so how do we punish someone who goes on the radio to do something that is not enshrined in the criminal code?" (Boadu-Ayeboafo, citinewsroom.com of Tuesday, 25th June 2019).

A BL typically provides for proper management of the broadcasting spectrum, with accountability, transparency and public participation in the processes spelt out in law, clearly (Buckley et al., 2005; Buckley, et al., 2008). According to international best practice on regulation of broadcasting, a regulatory body like the NCA should be independent of government, established on a statutory basis with powers and duties set out explicitly in law and with formal accountability to the public. The independence and institutional autonomy of the regulatory body should be adequately and explicitly protected from interference, particularly of a political or economic nature (Buckley et al., 2008). However, as the World Bank (2005) cited earlier observes, in the Ghanaian context, the NCA is not required by law to operate publicly and has no obligation to do public consultations in granting or refusing broadcasting frequencies. Worse of all, the NCA is a government agency directly under the Minister of Information and being under government control, the NCA cannot be free from governmental control.

Therefore, a regulatory framework can significantly contribute to addressing the partisanship in the Ghanaian media in general and to the partisan perceptions in the CR arena, in particular. Indeed, the Broadcasting Bill holds a great promise for this. Clause 54(a) of the Bill precludes political parties and politicians from being granted frequency authorizations. The Bill emphasizes transparency in the management of the broadcasting spectrum in general and in broadcasting authorization in general. These legislative requirements are expected to eliminate largely the political patronage in the broadcasting authorization and inject sanity in the system. On the CR sector, it is expected that BL will define the non-partisan ethos of CR to compel the stations to strictly adhere to the principle. The law would be crucial for several

reasons, the main one being the instilling of public confidence in the political neutrality of the CR stations in Ghana. It would definitely constitute a more effective mechanism than the GCRN's Non-partisanship Codes. In the legal lacuna, partisanship concerns raised by communities of the stations should not be dismissed as mere perceptions.

8.4. THE LOCAL LANGUAGE BROADCAST AS AN ADVANTAGE

Although experts estimate that the majority of Africans (about 90%) speak and transact their daily lives in their own languages (see for example Prah, 2001), governance in most African countries has been conducted mainly in colonial languages with the national constitutions, laws and policies formulated in these foreign languages. This naturally creates a situation in which the people are not only un-conversant with the laws by which they are governed, but also have limited opportunities to participate in policy and other decision making processes.

The mass media of communication largely followed a similar pattern in the era prior to media pluralism and diversity. The state-dominated broadcast institutions used mainly the colonial languages. There was provision for local language broadcast to cater for the needs of the majority illiterate sectors of the societies, but due to the multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic groups in most African countries, air time allocated for indigenous language broadcast was quite token (Hyden et al., 2002; Naymnjoh, 2005).

In Ghana, the GBC, in line with its public service mandate, has to broadcast in a mixture of English and the local languages on its national and regional networks, a situation that does augur well for the exclusive use of the indigenous languages. The mainstream commercial radio stations largely broadcast in English since their target audiences are the middle and upper classes of society who are similarly the targets of advertisers. To a significant extent, this trend undermines the purpose of media pluralism and diversity since the majorities of the people are denied the opportunity to participate in national discourse, which could only be possible through broadcasting in their local languages. It further violates the provision of the National Media Policy indicated in Chapter One, which stipulates that the media "shall serve the well-being of all Ghanaians, especially the disadvantaged".

However, there has been an encouraging development, where local language broadcast has become almost the norm amongst rural based commercial radio stations, and some of the urban based ones. As a way of encouraging the trend, the National Media Commission (NMC) has formulated Guidelines to guide local language broadcasting in the country. The Guidelines distil research in Journalism, linguistics, translation and media ethics and provide practical suggestions for improving local language broadcasting. The increasing use of local languages by commercial stations has opened up an exciting use of Ghanaian languages all over the country with the first significant outcome being the facilitation of a healthy opportunity for citizen participation in public affairs discussions as never before.

However, concerns are still being expressed about the proficiency and authenticity of local language being used on most of the commercial stations. For instance, even though the NMC's *Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting* (2009) discourages the use of proverbs, anecdotes and other linguistic devices that have the potential to embellish news stories, a practice that undermines the originality of the news, this practice, among many other violations of the Guidelines, persists (see Karkari, 2011; 2014). Besides, since the non-English speaking segments of the Ghanaian populations are not always the prime target audiences of the commercial radio stations, the goal of their increasing adoption of Ghanaian languages can be seen as a means to an end in terms of survival in the competitive broadcasting market and in furthering their commercial interest in winning audiences for advertising. In other words, such local language use is not based on deliberate policies in the interest of the poor and marginalized.

Unlike the commercial radio stations, an inherent element in the character of CR is its dedication to the use of the indigenous languages of its community (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Alumuku, 2006). Alumuku (2006) argues that, by their commitment to communicating in the people's own languages, CR is critical in responding to the language question in Africa in particular. At a broader level, CR presents huge opportunities for preserving and developing the cultures of African societies, which can in turn promote socio-economic development of the societies. For instance, as the largely unwritten indigenous wisdom, knowledge, philosophy and science is embedded in the language of the people, the development of the language could open up a new treasure of science and technology. Besides, CR can assist in introducing minority, remote or marginalized languages into the public domain, a development that can enhance the dignity and self-confidence of the speakers.

Indeed, most community radio stations in developing countries have as an overriding priority the promotion of the cultural values of tribal and ethnic groups who felt that their cultural identities were missing in the mainstream media of their nations (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). That is why tribal and minority group CR stations, wherever they are found, enjoy great popularity and patronage within the community.

8.4.1. FINDINGS

The study data established that the exclusive local language use by CR was a key distinguishing feature of the medium in the plural broadcasting system in Ghana. This distinctive characteristic of CR was articulated by significant portions of the national and local level participants. For the majority of the FGD participants in Agubie, "a CR station should be one that speaks the language that everyone, including the yam sellers, groundnut famers and the old people understand" (FGD Participants in Agubie village, 17/02/2017). A participant in the FGD in Wenchi, who was articulating the majority view said, "a CR station will not mix the local language with other languages as the commercial stations do. It ensures the authentic use of our own dialect" (FGD participants in Wenchi, 21/02/2017). It was

the view of the Legal Officer of the MLGRD that "For me, one of the ways in which I can identify a community radio station in any local community, is when the station speaks the language of the people not English or any other language (Interview with Legal Officer from the MLGRD, 28/02/2017).

The GCRN has a deliberate policy in the Programming Code for its member stations. The Code cited earlier in this chapter, states:

> GCRN's member stations regard the languages of their communities as an expression of the life and culture of its listening community as well as a vehicle for its effective participation in shaping the development agenda. As a key policy issue programming at a CR station shall be predominantly in the language/s of its listening community and shall be used as a platform to further develop the usage and the richness of the language/s of its listening community (GCRN's Programming Code, 2004:5).

The data showed that by their commitment to the use of the local languages in their broadcasts, CR stations in Ghana are more suited for communicating on local governance than other the other types of radio. The Legal Officer of the MLGRD argued that by their exclusive use of the Ghanaian languages, the CR stations in the country were uniquely placed to significantly contribute to addressing a fundamental barrier to effective citizen participation in the MMDAs and their demand for accountable and responsive governance. He pointed out for instance that the key policy documents of the MMDAs, including their by-laws, and development plans and budgets that are formulated in the English language, and argued that that makes them inaccessible to the largely illiterate sectors of the populations in rural communities. He explained:

> Part of the problems of Ghana's local governance regarding the low participation, accountability and responsiveness syndrome can be blamed on the fact that some fundamental conditions are being overlooked. One of these factors is, you see, the majority of our people do not really understand the work of the district assemblies because of the use of English Language in the work of the Assemblies. Even many of the Assembly members, because of their low levels of education, do not understand well the language used in the assembly meetings. So how can they explain these to the illiterate folk? Efforts to promote our decentralization system have been slow because the majority of the people... the women, farmers, chiefs, and what have you in the communities, have been left out in discussing what and how things can be done to improve their conditions. Language is a barrier! (Interview with Legal Officer, MLGRD, 28/02/2017)

The Legal Officer argued further that by their commitment to the use of the languages of their communities, CR stations, could best respond to the above

problems. To him, a starting point is for the community stations to be used to intensify civic education on local governance using the local languages:

> ... the community radio stations in the country can do a lot in explaining the local governance issues to the people in the languages the people understand well. With that understanding, the people themselves will now be asking questions about development issues in their district (Interview with Legal Officer, MLGRD, 28/02/2017).

Responses from the Lead Trainer GCRN's Key Informant supported the view that the exclusive use of the local languages presents the CR stations in Ghana as the favourable media for effective communication on local governance. This is evidenced in the quotation below:

> Community radio is first and foremost a community cultural entity ... it projects a definite identity in its use of the language of the people ... the local languages express the values of the people and make community radio programmes more intelligible to the local people. The fact that a community radio station is using the local language to communicate if the radio uses 'white' in the people's language to mean transparency and accountability in the behaviour of the local governance officials, all people know what that white represents. If 'black' is used to represent corruption, the people all understand that symbol. So for our people in the rural areas, communication is the ability to understand codes and ability to decode symbols. So community radio stations can provide the space for their communities to decode together and to have a common understanding on local governance issues. This brings the people together on a common language platform to discuss the governance of their community districts (Interview with Lead Training Facilitator at the GCRN, 16/2/2017).

The Lead Trainer noted that it was due to the importance of local languages that the GCRN had formulated the Programming Code indicated below to make the member stations really become the voices of the voiceless and the marginalized in the Ghanaian society.

8.4.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

However, part of the data was critical of the quality of local language use by Royals FM in particular, and CR in Ghana in general. The data implied that such weaknesses could significantly undermine the potential of CR in the country to contribute to improving some aspects of local governance in ways better than their commercial counterparts.

Part of the concern came from the Communication Expert Interviewee. While underscoring the views that the CR stations offered better communication channels

as they enabled ordinary people to participate in discourses on local governance issues, he expressed worry about the quality of local language use on both CR and the other types of radio stations. Noting that he had taken a personal interest in local language broadcasting in the country, the Communication Expert said, from his monitoring of many local language radio stations across the country, he was often disappointed that virtually all their presenters and producers were in the habit of mixing the local languages with English. Some of the stations did this so much to the annoyance of listeners. To him, that was an indication of the workers' inabilities to read and write the local language they used in high proficiency. The Key Informant Communication Expert feared that with the widespread violations of the linguistic qualities of local communities, CR stations, which were expected to champion the authentic use of the vernaculars of their communities, were rather diluting these languages. In the light of this, the Key Informant expressed doubts about the ability of CR workers to handle local governance issues in local languages more effectively than their other counterparts.

Indeed, evidence provided in the next chapter supports the Communication Expert's reservations. It was found in the case of Royals FM that linguistic difficulties presented a major constraint in the ability of the Royals FM and the Wenchi Municipal Assembly to collaborate on programming that focused on the Assembly's development plans and budgets that would have availed these policies to the local people to make inputs into. While the key officials of the Assembly were non-native language speakers the programmes producers lacked the linguistic abilities to explicate the concepts to concepts.

Another critical remark was made by the Traditional Ruler Key Informant that boarded on general cultural incompetence on the part of the programmes producers and presenters of Royals FM. The Traditional Ruler said these young producers were deliberately or ignorantly undermining certain cultural values of the area by, for example, saying things on air that would otherwise be culturally tabooed. He noted for instance that some of them were in the habit of addressing chiefs on air by their names without their titles, a situation that is abominable across the Ghanaian cultures and contended. This implied that the workers lacked adequate cultural knowledge, and could not be relied upon to champion local governance issues effectively in the people's language.

This study suggests that the state of linguistic deficiency complained about affairs is a wider problem of cultural decline in the Ghanaian society. A way to address the situation is to make a strong case for improving the teaching of culture in the school system of the country. This would equip radio workers with competent skills to ensure that local language stations and the community stations in particular, can serve as platforms for popular participation in matters of governance and public affairs.

8.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter is the introductory segment of the two-chapter series on the empirical results of the study. It is cantered on resolving the first research question regarding participants' perceptions of the role of CR in Ghana's local governance, within the pluralistic broadcasting system in the country. The data presented pointed to CR as largely perceived as a more favourable medium of communication on local governance than its public service and commercial radio counterparts, due primarily to its principles of community ownership, non-profit and non-partisan orientation and character, as well as, its exclusive use of indigenous languages. The data was thus presented and analysed under each of those features of CR as a sub-chapter. Each of the segments began with a comparative analysis of the similarities or differences of the various broadcasting types as a basis for drawing out possible advantages or disadvantages in their governance role.

The first section of the chapter focused on the community ownership structure of CR noting that CR has been presented as a community owned and controlled broadcasting system, totally dedicated to the public good. Participatory management involving community electing the governing councils was underscored as a crucial element of the of the community ownership principle. The community ownership of CR was compared against public service and commercial broadcasting that are often susceptible to government or private owners' controls, which tend to undermine their public service functions such as those on the pursuit of good local agenda. The study findings were contextualized in the community ownership principle. A greater portion of the respondents pointed to ownership as the cardinal identification mark of CR and noted that the principle gave CR an advantage over other broadcasting types in promoting good governance at the local level. The central argument in the responses was identified as the decision and policy making powers vested in the community of CR. With that a CR station's policies would more likely than other types of radio be formulated to include local governance issues as local governance is the locus of community development, which is the prime agenda of CR. However, there was controversy over the community ownership status of Royals FM. The majority of the respondents did not regard Royals FM as being owned by the people of Wenchi in spite of its conversion from a commercial to a community status. This was because the process of conversion was neither accompanied by arrangements for real ownership transfer to the community nor the introduction of participatory management structures. The founding EC was neither elected nor had ever been changed. A notable outcome of this state of affairs was a lack of trust in the EC to make policies such as those on the stations engagements on local governance, in the best interest of the community. Besides the low sense of ownership and responsibility was found to negatively affect the sustainability of the local governance programmes as the sense of volunteerism amongst the station's volunteer workers was low with key programme producers easily being poached by commercial stations.

Irrespective of mixed ownership perceptions, Royals FM was deemed by most of the community level respondents to be playing important roles in socio-economic uplifting of their communities by rendering services in ways different from other radio stations. The result showed that Royal FM was recognized as taking a lead position in championing local governance issues.

The sub-chapter called attention to a fact that the low sense of community ownership found at Royals FM and its attendant sustainability challenges was a Ghana-wide issue, because anecdotal studies had established that most of the communities of CR stations in the country were found not to feel that they really owned the stations. The studies revealed that most of the stations were individual and small group establishments and had remained in the control of the founders with little processes of community participation in their management. The study advocated for a law to be put in place on the community ownership structure, as in other countries, as a major measure to ensuring adherence to the principle for the promotion of authentic CR in the country for an authentic CR would be more credible and trustworthy than a shadow one in its pursuit of a good local governance agenda.

Section two discussed the non-profit principle of CR with the proposition that since public service broadcasting systems in developing countries such as Ghana often depend on government financial subvention they would tend to have a timid attitude in holding government accountable, and that as commercial broadcasters are dominated by profit maximizing imperatives, they would most likely be constrained in pursuing a good local governance agenda. The study findings in that section revealed that the non-profit principle was identified by the majority of the respondents as a source of advantage for its local governance role. A key consideration in this regard was that CR could invest part of its profits into local governance programming in line with its community service function. It was noted that the GCRN had put in place a revenue generation code to guide the non-profit operations of the members. This notwithstanding, whilst a significant part of the data agreed that a wide range of Royals FM's public service programmes, including free air time for election campaigns, were in a clear fulfilment of its adherence to the non-profit principle, a minority segment of the respondents, who misunderstood the concept to mean that CR was barred from commercial advertising held that, since Royals FM was carrying advertising, it was violating the non-profit principle. It was reported that Royals FM, like most CR stations in the developing world, was facing financial sustainability challenges by its not-profit status, a situation that in turn impacted negatively its local governance programmes. The proposal to introduce a legal framework for broadcasting regulation in Ghana was maintained in the discussions, with the argument that such a law would make it possible for CR to benefit from public funding for the sustainability of the stations.

The third section of the chapter examined the principle of non-partisanship of CR, juxtaposing it with the possible political controls that often characterize public service and commercial broadcasting in the developing world, a situation that tended

to undermine their ability to become unfettered sources of information and platforms for political debates. Results of the study revealed that Royals FM and other GCRN member stations were enjoined by Codes of Conduct to maintain non-partisan posture in politics in order to create sense of trust regarding their contribution to local governance. There was evidence on the ground of Royals FM's adherence to the non-partisanship ethos. However, it was noted that Royals FM was perceived by a section of the community level respondents not to be politically neutral accusing the station for showing political favouritism towards some political party candidates during national and local level elections. It was pointed out that several other NCRN stations had been tagged politically in their pursuit of good local governance with occasional physical and verbal attacks visited on them. So the conclusion was drawn that CR in Ghana were not free from the politically partisan tag placed on the Ghanaian media. It was underscored there that a legal or regulatory framework that defines the non-partisanship of CR would be helpful building public confidence in the partisan neutrality of CR in the country.

The fourth section of the chapter discussed the exclusive use of indigenous languages by CR, nothing that as the mainstream public service and public broadcasters in Ghana predominantly use the English, the practice was largely against the interest of the greater number of illiterate people in the country who were excluded from participation in development and governance discourses. The study established that the GCRN's programming code had enjoined member stations to consider local language broadcast as an extension of the mandate to develop the languages of their communities for social –cultural development. The study findings posited that the local governance use by CR presented to it an important advantage in overcoming some communication challenges in Ghana's local governance system. It was noted in particular that since most of the key policy documents of the MMDAs were written in English, CR stations local governance programmes in the indigenous languages, could make their content accessible to the majority illiterate rural folks. However, the data showed that some of the workers at Royals FM were inadequate in the authentic use of the local language, a situation that posed as a constraint to effective communication on local governance issues. It was suggested, as a way of dealing with the language challenge, that there should be an intensification of local language teaching at the educational institutions of the country.

CHAPTER 9. HOW ROYALS FM IS TACKLING PERTINENT ISSUES IN LOCAL IN THE WENCHI MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

This second chapter of the data presentation and analysis is dedicated to examining the local governance-related programmes on Royals FM with a view to finding out how the programmes are tackling pertinent issues of good governance in the Wenchi Municipal District. Special focus is on programmes that promote citizen participation in decision-making, accountability of local governance officials to the citizens and responsiveness to the development needs of the people. The mainly qualitative data was obtained through interviews, examination of relevant documents such as the programme schedules of the station, and monitoring of relevant on-air programmes. The analysis of the findings has been done using the framework of the traditional governance functions of the media, namely; civic forum, watchdog and agenda setting discussed under the empirical chapter.

The chapter is divided into four main parts. Part one focuses on participation in policy making through the civic-forum function of the media; part two deals with the watchdog role of the media to promote governance accountability; part three is on the agenda-setting function of the media to promote responsiveness; and the fourth part focuses on the social accountability aspect of governance accountability. Each segment proceeds with a presentation of the field findings to be followed with analysis and discussions of the findings as well as summary of the main points in the discussions.

9.1. HOW ROYALS FM IS PROMOTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

9.1.1. PARTICIPATION IN POLICY ISSUES

In Chapter Five, political participation was defined as people's involvement in two main spheres of political life, namely; policy formulation and civic related activities, such as elections, communal labour and tax paying. Local governance was said to present enhanced opportunities for citizens' involvement such activities, particularly in the formulation and implementation of development plans and budgets as well as in local civic activities. The Empirical chapter underscored as an important role for the media in promoting participatory decision making in governance through its civic-forum function, enjoining independent media to take responsibility for providing spaces for public deliberations that facilitate the expression of multiple voices and views on major issues that can concomitantly influence development policies (Ojo, 2005; Norris, 2006).

This sub-chapter presents and discusses findings on how Royals FM was serving as a civic forum for facilitating citizens' debates on policy issues at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. Focus is on the development plans and budgets because in Chapter One it was stated that citizen participation in Ghana's local governance rests in the formulation of those two policies. This section of the chapter discusses findings on Royals FMs facilitation of the local people's involvement in civic activities such as local elections, communal projects execution and local revenue generation.

9.1.2. FINDINGS

There was almost no evidence of programmes broadcast on Royals FM that focused on facilitating citizen participation in policy making such as the district's medium term development plans and budgets, a specific area identified in this study. Indeed, the FGDs with programme producers of the station and the interview with the District Presiding Member (PM) of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly revealed that the budgets and plans of the Assembly had not been for specific areas of Royals FM's local governance programmes.

What was found was evidence of programmes that promoted robust public debates on a wide range of issues relating to the responsibility of the Assembly. In fact, during the period of data collection at the community, many of the programmes monitored on the station were characterized by intense public debates through phone-ins and the use of some social media platforms. These programmes are presented in detail under the themes of accountability and responsiveness in subsequent sub-sections of the chapter, but in analysing their content it was not discovered that they were deliberately driven to feed into the Assembly's plans and budgets.

It is, however, important to call attention to some useful ideas discovered during the interviews with the Communication Expert and the Legal Officer of the MLGRD (cited under the previous chapter) that can guide a CR station such as Royals FM to facilitate local community participation in local governance policy making processes. The Communication Expert posited as follows:

> CR can be effective community mobilizers of citizens for participating in policy making processes at MMDAs in a several ways. For instance, if CR stations pursue an agenda of public debates that conscientiously focus on the major developmental issues in their districts.... and if the local authorities do follow these debates, the major themes and issues of the discussions can find expression in the development plans and budgets. This would ensure that the most pressing development needs are prioritized in the MMDAs development plans and budgets (Interview with Communication Expert, 27/02/2017).

The Legal Officer of the MLGRD proposed, what appeared a more practical approach. To him, the drafts of the Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs) could be presented on air on CR stations by the technocrats at the MMDAs with the facilitation of the CR station's programme producers. Key elements of the plans and budgets could be explained in the local languages to the public, which could demystify the policies that are usually couched in inaccessible language to the masses. This process could make possible for the public to make inputs and contribute to modifications and finalization of the policies through phone-ins. The Legal Officer argued further that since most of the local citizens do not have direct opportunities to participate in the planning and budgeting, the radio programmes could provide major avenues for the public to comment on the Assemblies' plans and budgets through which the priority needs of the local people could be captured into the plans and budgets. He went on to posit that this would be an innovative approach that would significantly mitigate some of the negative effects of the central government control of the MMDAs budgets where the MoF directs the MMDAs to use their Common Fund, a convention discussed in Chapter Two, as often going against the felt needs of local communities. In his words:

> If the plans and budgets of MMDAs have heavy doses of public inputs that capture the local priorities, what the MoF would approve would definitely not deviate too much from those priorities (Interview with Legal Officer, MLGRD, 28/02/2017).

9.1.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Expert's views presented above seem to resonate with some of the scholarly works on local governance cited in Chapter Five on local governance participatory planning and budgeting processes. For example, Ahwoi (2017) and Oluwu and Wusch (2004) were cited there, contending that an effective way citizens' views can be reflected in local government units policy making processes is when they are subjected to public debates and discussions through appropriate and accessible channels. As noted in Chapter one f this study, since there are virtually no community level discussions and debates on the development plans and budgets of the MMDAs, CR stations could best serve as the fora for such public debates. But this depends on the capacity of CR to strategically design local governance programming to focus on local governance policies.

Such innovative programming is feasible due to radio being by far one of the most interactive media in recent times, for the reasons indicated in Chapter One. It provides a singular means for public debates and deliberations on policy issues. Participation through radio made possible through audience phone-in programmes has been promoted by the rapid expansion of telecommunication facilities experienced world-wide in the twenty-first century (Fleming, 2002). In Ghana there has been an increased telephone density resulting from telecommunications reforms with mobile telephony use increasing tremendously among all sectors of the society. Broadcasting in the country has harnessed the use of telephone to a great advantage

by using phone-in programmes to energize the public sphere, enabling people to participate through call-in programmes like talk shows and vox pops (Gadzekpo, 2008). Programming on most radio stations, including those in remote areas of the country are characterized by listener-call ins, making possible for villagers to phone-in to radio programmes to express their opinions on local and national issues in indigenous languages. As Gadzekpo (2008) observes, the public space and opportunities for citizens to express themselves freely as well as enhance the culture of debate and dialogue, has been expanded, providing forum for the Ghanaian public to criticize and comment on important national issues leading to governmental action.

There has been an increasing scholarship on the convergence between CR and mobile telephony, which underlines the potential of CR to extraordinarily impact on the democratization of communication (see Gorden, 2012 for example). The proliferations of both CR and mobile telephony can, therefore, be said to increase possibilities for ordinary people to participate in the public sphere. Nowadays, as Jallov (2012) observes, grassroots communities can contribute to wider debates on issues of pertinence to their community via telephone. Thus CR can make local government truly participatory by providing a voice to local citizens, including the people in the villages, to voice their needs and demands as well as participate in the debates on important policies issues.

It must be pointed out, however, that it is not clear if other CR stations in the country are undertaking such ventures as there is a dearth of literature on the subject. This could be a research area, but from the interviews with Royals FM's FGD participants and the PM of the Assembly, it was gathered that two main factors were responsible for the lack of specific focus on programmes on the budgets and plans. The first related to a lack of knowledge in such policy related programming and weak capacities on the part of both Royals F.M and the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. The majority of the FGD Participants at Royals FM perceived issues on budgets and plans of the DA as highly technical that required specialized skills and capacities on the side of programme producers to explicate on air and noted that the station lacked personnel of this calibre. A check on the educational professional profiles of the producers and reporters of Royals FM found that most of them had low educational standards with the highest level of education attained by most of them being the Senior High School certificate, a level of education that is lower than a college or university diploma or degree. None of them had received formal training in media or journalism, with the majority of them having received basic training on the job. As a result, the FG of producers admitted some inadequacies in their work in general and that relating to local governance in particular. They noted in particular that, by their level of education and training, they lacked adequate understanding of the concept of local governance and essential documents of the DA, including the development plans and budgets. That was the major reason for not focusing programmes on those areas.

On the part of the Assembly, the PM of the Assembly intimated that even if Royals FM had initiated a programme on the Assembly's plans and budgets, the Assembly would not have been found wanting for a practical one. He explained that many of the technical staff of the Assembly, including the District Planning and Budgeting Officers, had often been non-speakers of the native languages in which Royals FM exclusively broadcasts. They would, therefore, not be in the position to present information on the radio in those languages. The handicap presented by this linguistic issue confirms the validity of the language factor discussed in the previous chapter, where it was noted that, in as much as the exclusive use of indigenous languages by CR represented an important advantage in its local governance role, linguistic inadequacies on the part of CR workers could pose a serious setback to this advantage.

9.1.4. PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ACTIVITIES

It was discussed in the Chapter Three that as part of its civic forum function, the media is expected to promote a sustained civic education on their rights and responsibilities to encourage public participation in civic activities such as national and local level elections, in tax paying and in communal labour. Particularly in the area of elections, the media's main role is to provide fair access to spaces for campaigning by opposition parties and groups so that electorates can have information that enables them compare and evaluate retrospective records, prospective policies and leadership characteristics of contenders and make informed electoral choices (Odugbemi & Norris, 2010). The goal of this sub-section is to present and discuss Royals FM's programmes that promote civic education on local level elections, tax paying and in communal labour.

9.1.5. FINDINGS

There was evidence on the ground that Royals FM was giving ample attention to civic education. There were established programmes that focused on developing a civic consciousness on rights to demand accountability and responsiveness. Royals FM had a long-term partnership with the Wenchi Municipal Office of the NCCE on civic education dating back to 2000 when the NCCE had been broadcasting a one-hour weekly programme titled, *Hu Abaen Assem*, literally meaning Understanding the Work of Your Government. The every Thursday programme at 9.00 am featured officials from the NCCE on talk-shows and phone-ins on a wide range of issues on the rights and responsibilities of the local people on their DA. The programme offered a platform for public education on democracy and good governance as well as peaceful co-existence and national integration.

In an interview with my Key Informant District Director of the National Commission for Civic Education (the NCCE), the civic education drive on Royals FM had made a significant impact on the level of citizens' awareness on a wide range of rights. He claimed that:

> During our weekly radio discussions, you can see from the phone-ins that people really understand their rights and they are passionate to exercise them. We see for ourselves some of the youth demanding accountability from the duty-bearers. For example, recently there was suspicion that some big men were misappropriating funds at the Assembly. When the Wenchi Youth for Development Association called on the public to demonstrate on the streets, the streets were full with people. They were asking the MCE to know the truth. This shows they know their accountability rights...all because Royals talks about it all the time (Interview with the Wenchi District Director of the NCCE, 17/02/2017).

Royals FM had standing programmes that aimed to promote participation in local level elections and addressing related challenges. In the FGDs with the station level respondents, it was revealed that during DA elections, civic education was intensified aimed to encourage high voter turnout and for people to freely cast their votes without partisan or monetary influences. In addition, a daily one-hour long programme, *Assembly Voti Miren-Enie*, meaning the Assembly *Elections are Here Again*, was dedicated free of charge to aspiring Assembly persons for their campaigns. The programmes gave opportunities to the aspirants to propagate their campaign messages to the electorates, and moreover gave listeners the opportunities to call into the programmes to interrogate the candidates on their promises.

A special slot was usually allocated to female contestants. The broad objective of the programme titled, *Yen Maa Mire Asun, meaning The Time for Our Women is Now,* was to educate the womenfolk on the DA elections and encourage them to participate by standing to be elected into the DA and to motivate them to turn out massively to cast their ballots on election days. The campaign was launched by Royals FM in collaboration with the Gender Desk of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly whose function is to promote the role of women in the Ghana's decentralization.

The radio programmes were said to have made several dramatic impacts. A remarkable one recounted by the PM of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly was that Yen Maa Mire Asun had resulted in a rise in the number of female Assembly persons to eight in the current assembly, the highest number of female Assembly members in the history of the Wenchi Assembly. On a more remarkable note, the PM of the previous Assembly was a woman, an achievement that was attributed to the role of the radio station. As a candidate, Priscilla Owusua was said to have demonstrated her communication and leadership skills on the radio programmes, winning for her the hearts of her fellow Assembly persons.

9.1.6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In spite of Royals FM's impressive civic education drive presented above, some significant shortfalls in the impact of the programmes were pointed out by the two Assembly person's interviewees. One of them expressed worry that the

education did not go to educate the people on the actual functions of the Assembly persons, a situation that left the people poorly informed about the actual responsibilities of the Assembly members in the local governance system of Ghana. As a result, many of the people often demanded from Assembly members things that were outside their responsibilities. In the words of one of them:

> At times the people put so much pressure on us the Assembly men because the NCCE officials have been telling them on Royals FM that they voted for us to bring development. But the NCCE officers have not specified to the people the kind of development the Assembly members are supposed to bring to the people. So the people make all kinds of request from us the Assembly members. For example, some of the villages in my electoral area ask me questions like, when are they going to have a borehole? When I am going to roof the school that the wind has taken off? ... Some even ask for money to pay school fees and medical bills. In one village, the youth put a notice by the road that no water, no voting for assembly man again. But the work of the Assembly man is not to roof schools and pay school fees. We are not even paid for our work at the Assembly, so where from the money to help our people?

The other Assembly person felt that the civic education was skewed towards empowering the citizens to demand their rights with little attention on citizens' responsibilities in Ghana's local governance system, contending that while the public awareness was leading to enhanced civic activism in demanding for their rights, there was little corresponding action in terms of the exercise of their responsibilities. He further explained that:

> There are some of the people in my electoral area who have never come out to join communal labour ... they don't want to pay taxes. Some people think it is the responsibility of the assembly man to do everything. At times some of them think the Assembly takes money from them and is not using it well. But if there is no money, how can the Assembly develop the area? *(*Interview with an Assemblyman for Branam Electoral Area, 17/02/2017).

The unwillingness to pay taxes as claimed in the above quotation was confirmed by sections of the village level respondents, as noted in a subsequent section of the chapter, who even boasted during the FGDs about how they had resolved never to pay taxes to the Assembly in protest for lack of social amenities in their community.

The apparent lack of focus of the civic education drive on civic apathy towards their responsibilities as spelt out in the local government system and in the national Constitution constitutes a critical gap in the local governance role of Royals FM. This is because civic apathy has been identified by analysts,

including Ayee (2004) as a factor undermining participation in the country's local governance. Explaining what citizens apathy in local governance is, Ayee notes that clear signs of this attitude in Ghana's local governance, includes low turn outs for local level elections, reluctance to attend communal labour and unwillingness to pay taxes. It is important to point argue further that as tax revenues are a significant part of locally generated income of the MMDA for development, civic education to encourage tax paying is crucial for raising adequate funding for the provision of services. As shall be seen in a next section of this chapter, deprivations of many rural communities in the Wenchi District would have been eased if the Assembly had had enough resources to provide basic services.

On voter education to encourage turn out for the DA elections, it is important to note that, even though this area was singled out as a special focus of the civic education campaign on Royals FM, its impact could not be ascertained. This is because statistics were not readily available for comparative analysis to determine the trend of impact back. As a result, Royals FM could not be credited with concrete contributions to addressing the electoral apathy aspect of the citizen apathy problem. But this has been confirmed as a serious challenge as the DA elections have been bedevilled with low voter turn outs since the first elections were organized in 1988/89 (see Ayee, 2004; Agyei-Aboagye, 2008 for statistical trends).

Another critical area that the civic education programme did not seem to address was that of partisanship in the DA elections. As discussed in several places in this study, partisanship in Ghana's local governance system, manifested in the DA elections where political parties support candidates to win and later make them agents for grassroots voter mobilizers for national elections, has widely been condemned as an unhealthy practice in the otherwise non-partisan system. It is, therefore, a critical area to focus civic education on, it but was unclear if Royals FM was doing this. While the NCCE Director and the station level interviews claimed that aspect was one of foci of the civic education campaigns, most of the community level respondents refuted the claims, saying they had not heard programmes broadcast on the theme. Notably, the Traditional Ruler Key Informant said he had never heard a mention and suggested it was a deliberate strategy to keep the rural folks ignorant so that they could be manipulated by politicians in favour of the NPP party.

9.2. HOW ROYALS FM IS PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE WENCHI DISTRICT

This second part of the chapter focuses on Royals FM's programmes that were found to focus on promoting accountability at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. The findings and discussions are located with the context of the conceptualization of governance accountability as an indicator of good governance and the watchdog functions of the media in promoting accountability. Governance accountably was defined in the Conceptual Chapter as referring to the responsibility of elected leaders and public power holders to report on and justify their actions and decisions to

citizens and electorates to enable the public judge their performance. Accountability was seen to involve the formulation and implementation of policies in ways that meet the needs of the public as well as the minimization of all forms of corruption, which ensures that public resources are safeguarded from theft and used for the public good (Ackerman, 2005).

It has been discussed in the said chapter that local governance offers greater opportunities for governance accountability because public officials can be held more directly accountable as local government structures, institutions and officials can be made more easily answerable to the local people (Crook & Manor, 1998; Grindle, 2007).

However, as has been noted in several places in the study, accountability in local governance has always been elusive in many developing countries, including Ghana. But the chapter that provided the empirical underpinnings of the study underscored that this can hold government at all levels accountable through its normative watchdog role.

9.2.1 FINDINGS

The study found that Royals FM had in place a number of innovative programmes that sought to promote accountability by exposing neglect by the Wenchi Municipal Assembly of its responsibilities such as those related to poor sanitary conditions, lack of infrastructure at schools, and inadequate health and toilet facilities in the Municipality. The programmes kept the Assembly persons on their toes by constantly calling them to respond to concerns raised by their electorates. The station did this by keeping an open microphone, both in it's out-reach broadcasts and through phone-in programmes. There was evidence that Royals FM occasionally exposed financial corruption on the part of officials at the Assembly in collaboration with some CBOs. Three main accountability programmes are discussed in the foregoing.

9.2.2 YEN ASSEMBLY FUO MIRE (MEET YOUR ASSEMBLY PERSON)

Yen Assembly Fuo Mire was one of the key standing accountability programme aired every mid-week. The programme was meant for Assembly persons within the District to report on and answer questions on happenings in the District and in their electoral areas. Each of the 27 Assembly persons in the Wenchi Constituency had the opportunity to feature on the radio station at least three times during the year. The programme took the form of an interview between a host from Royals FM and the Assembly persons followed by phone-ins from listeners. Some of the Assembly persons, who lived in distant places and found it difficult to be in the studios, were linked up by telephone.

As they took their turns to appear on the programme, the Assembly persons were asked questions on various issues such as their frequency of meetings with their electorates, their knowledge on general happenings in their areas and development problems and plans to solve the problems. Their electorates, and the general public who were usually pre-informed about the days of appearance of the various Assembly persons on the programme, were encouraged to phone in to ask questions on the claims of their Assembly persons.

According to my two Assembly Person Key Informants, *Yen Assembly Fuo Mire* had been the most effective mechanism for reaching their electorates since they were not in the position to regularly visit the people as constitutionally mandated. Most Assembly persons were said to be in full time formal employment, working as teachers, bankers, nurses or others with over 90% of the Assembly persons living and working in places outside their electoral areas. Most of them were unable to regularly visit their electorates either due to the exigencies of their work or difficulties in travelling. For instance, I gathered from the FGD Participants at Agubie and Akete villages that their Assembly persons were working and living in the Wenchi Township and did not visit them regularly; hence Royals FM was the means of contacting them. These findings confirm the problem of irregular meetings by Assembly persons with their communities in contravention with their mandate to do so, a state of affairs discussed under the Problem Statement of the study in Chapter One.

Therefore, *Yen Assembly Fuo Mire* served as the 'meeting sessions' between the Assembly persons and their electorates but they were described generally as opportunities for the electorates to vent their anger on the Assembly persons on numerous issues ranging from their failure to communicate with the communities as required of them, to broken electoral promises in the provision of social amenities as well as the general problems of underdevelopment. According to one of the Assembly persons Key Informant, *Yen Assembly Fuo Mire* "often puts us face to face with our angry electorates who pour their venom on us for almost all the problems in the community" (Interview with Assembly person of Branam Electoral Area, 17/02/2017).

The Participants in the station's Programmes Production FGD confirmed that the programme kept the Assembly members on their toes by exposing inefficiencies on their part, noting that most Assembly persons had shown dreaded attitudes in taking their turn on *Yen Assembly Fuo Mire* because of what they termed the on-air public bashing. In the FGDs with community representatives at Wenchi, Akete and Agubie, most participants said Royals FM was a conduit for them to voice their complaints about their assembly persons and about the Assembly as a whole. A participant in the FGD at Agubie noted that confrontations between community members and their Assembly persons often arose on air because some of the Assembly persons often attempted providing wrong information about their work and the conditions in their communities to cover up their inefficiencies. The Participant explained:

> If you look around our village, you will see our sufferings... no toilets, no teachers ... yet when our Assembly man goes on radio, he will say all these facilities are there. Why won't we get annoyed with him? (FDG Participant at Agubie Village, 17/02/2017).

No wonder that the Assembly person of Branam described as a state of insecurity the situation of the *Yen Assembly Fuo Mire* as he explained:

> Just last week, when I took my turn on *Yen Assembly Fuo Mire*, someone from my community called into the programme about structures that had been erected illegally in front of the Zonal Council office in my area. The question was whether or not I was aware of the situation and if yes, who authorized them... whether it was the right place for those structures to be put, and if no, what had the zonal council been doing about them in order not to allow things get to a point where ejecting the users would be more difficult. I referred the caller to the Zonal council chairman with the excuse that I was just the secretary to the council. But I felt really guilty about the situation because I was personally aware but did nothing (Interview with Assembly Man for Branam Electoral Area, 18/02/2017).

The Assembly person explained his likening of the situation created for the Assembly members by Royals FM to one of insecurity because, while they were going about their daily activities, they bore in mind that their names could come up on air.

The programme was bringing in positive changes in the work of not only the Assembly persons but the Assembly as a whole, as were acknowledged in the interviews and discussions. According to the PM of the Assembly, there had been a change in the conduct of the Assembly's business as he had witnessed over the two years of his work at the Assembly. He mentioned for instance that as a result of the constant searchlight thrown on the Assembly's work by Royals FM, the General Meetings were being held on schedule. He recalled that in the previous year when the General Assembly Meeting was delaying, Royals FM raised the issue constantly and involved the people through phone-ins until the meeting was held. He summed it up as follows:

> I think in the assembly, as I speak now, things have changed, ranging from the attitude of the workers to the conduct of the Assembly members. The assembly is now a listening one. We are now gaining interest in the Assembly (Participant in FGDs 19/02/2017).

9.2.3 PAEMUKA (SAY IT AS IT IS)

Paemuka, which means literally, say it as it is, was a segment within the Daily Morning Show Programmes. The programme's title was derived from the Appour Festival indicated in Chapter Three, which was said to provide an occasion for frank

communication aimed to correct social ills. *Paemuka* therefore translated this tradition into a daily affair. Paemuka was driven by live reports by Royals FM's reporters deployed to various locations to follow up on the issues raised during the *Yen Assembly Fuo Mire* Programme and make live reports to the station. The programme was driven by telephone-calls from community members on problems within the Municipality that were deemed not to be receiving the attention of stakeholders. Focus was on the most critical issues such as sanitation, education, health, roads and agriculture. Relevant duty bearers were invited to the studio or called up on phone to respond to the issues raised. Listeners were further invited to phone-in and contribute to the programmes. This usually generated debates, producing varying perspectives that could sometimes be punchy, but nevertheless useful for solving the problems.

During the data collection period, I witnessed one of such debates when a reporter on a site gave the microphone to some irate residents of a suburb of the Wenchi township to complain about a public toilet that was said to have been in a deplorable condition for the past few months, a situation the people said, had been the cause of a cholera outbreak in the area that had caused several deaths. The residents blamed the state of affairs on the Toilet Attendant, whom they said had not been attentive to his duties of keeping the facility clean. The apparently infuriated Attendant impatiently seized the microphone from the speakers and denied responsibility for the poor state of the toilet facility, drawing attention to a refuse container that was meant for dumping the waste into for collection by a waste management company, Zoom Lion for final disposal, but which had not been emptied for a long time. The Attendant claimed he had reported the situation to the Assembly man for the area countless times. The said Assembly person was phoned to respond to the allegations on air; he in turn blamed it on the Wenchi Municipal Assembly for failing to compel Zoom Lion to honour its contract with the DA on the proper management of the waste in the Township. The District Manager of Zoom Lion Company was called on phone and was asked to explain the alleged negligence on the part of his company to dispose the waste. According to him, it was because the DA had failed to make payment for the services of the Company. Thereupon, the station called the MCE, who could not give any tangible reason for the indebtedness to Zoom Lion. For that reason, the MCE received a lot of public bashing from callers until he promised to settle the indebtedness to the Waste Management Company as soon as possible.

My Key Informant PM of the Wenchi DA testified that such pressures from Royals FM and its callers were a daily phenomenon the Assembly had to put up with, saying:

> Almost every day, I am called to answer some questions on one issue or the other. Just yesterday, I was called on phone on the sanitation situation of the abattoir in the Municipality. The people reported to the station that the place was in a deplorable condition and that the butchers were using old lorry tyres to burn the slaughtered animals. I had to visit the facility

> accompanied by a reporter from the station who interviewed me live. I have asked the Sanitation Department to take immediate steps to improve the conditions (Interview with the PM of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly, 19/02/2017).

The above statement and my witness story confirm that the Paemuka programme had been effective in exerting pressure, sometimes constraining duty-bearers to take necessary actions on the issues involved.t advocated for the improvements of services.

9.2.4 INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

In addition to the preceding discussed programmes, I also gathered stories on corruption revelations by Royals FM's Investigative Team. Notable among them involved an inflation of contract sums for projects by officials at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. According to the Programmes Head of Royals FM who narrated the incident on behalf of his group in a FGD, the MCE's Sessional Address to the General Assembly, had indicated that the cost of a Police Post at a community called Tromeso was Eighty Four Thousand and Seventeen Ghana cedis (GHC84,017.41), and that of 6-seater water closets sanitary facility at Wenchi New Market was Two Hundred and Eighty Six Ghana Cedis Forty Pesewas (100,286.40). Information on the inflation was leaked by a whistle-blower to Royals FM. Armed with the facts, Royals FM's Team of Investigative Journalists undertook investigations into the issue with collaborations with a CBO, the Wenchi Youth and Development Association (WYDA). It was found out that the figures on the payments for the two contracts, respectively, as presented to the Assembly, had been inflated from Forty Eight Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Ghana cedis, Twenty Six Pesewas (GHC 48,450.26) to Eighty Four Thousand and Seventeen Ghana cedis (GHC 84,017. 41).

The facts were presented to the affected officials who denied each of them, describing the information as malicious and mischievous fabrications by detractors. They threatened to sue Royals FM, if it went ahead to put any of the information in the public domain. Undeterred by the threat, the station went ahead to report. The stories stirred public outrage. Further, WYDA called a press conference, which was covered by Royals and other media outlets. The reports on the press conference drew the attention of the Wenchi Traditional Council who likewise organized a press conference to register their displeasure about the developments at the Assembly. In the wake of all these, the MP invited the Economic and Organized Crime Organization of Ghana to investigate the allegations, vowing to present the report to the then president Dramani Mahama. This was closed to the General Elections in December 2016, in which the NDC lost power to the NPP. However, as at the time of data collection two months later, the EOCO's investigative report was yet to be made public.

9.2.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The programmes described above portray innovative ways Royals FM was adopting in promoting accountability at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. The programmes basically allowed the station and the local people to monitor the workings of the DA almost on a day-to-day basis, thereby helping citizens to hold the authorities to account. It is particularly interesting how the station was refashioning journalism to involve the people in daily discourses on local governance, giving them voice to complain about issues that affected them. The programmes encouraged the producers to be creative in finding their own voices to explore their own visions for what the station should broadcast on local governance issues. The constant interactions and participation by the people in discussions on the governance programmes can be said to be creating a sense of 'citizenship', a concept, Moufte, cited in Rodrigueez and Miralles (2014:399) explains as more about the participation of people in everyday political practices than something that is guaranteed by merely in being part of a system.

More importantly, the *Paemuka* and the *Yen Kusiera Mire* can be said to address the communication gaps between, not only the Assembly persons and their communities, but also between the local people and the Assembly as a whole. As the programmes enabled contacts between the Assembly persons and their electorates, they could be said to be making up for the shortcomings of the Assembly persons in terms of their inability to fulfil their mandate to meet their electorates regularly, a problem discussed in Chapter One.

However, the interviews and discussions revealed several challenges and tensions associated with the accountability or watchdog functions of Royals FM. A major gap in the accountability role of Royals was the station's apparent inability to hold the MDCE to account. In Chapter One, it was proffered that with the current non-elective position of MMDCEs, who wield enormous powers over the Assemblies, CR could serve as a viable means of holding these leaders accountable to the people on condition that the MMDCEs could open themselves up for more scrutiny. This was supposition was affirmed by my Key Informant Communication Expert who posited that:

> One way the MMDCEs can be held accountable in their non-elective position by CR is that they should avail themselves on regular radio programmes to account to the people in the District on the work of the Assembly and to answer questions from the people particularly on issues of the development plans and budgets. Subject to such public scrutiny, the MMDCEs would be more mindful to take decisions in the public interest (Interview with Communication Expert 27/02/2017).

However, there was little evidence of this at the study site. In fact, the Team of Programme Producers and Reporters in the FGDs described it as a daunting task to get the MCEs to honour invitations to appear on the radio to respond to certain

crucial questions on the Assembly as a whole in on his specific role. According to one news reporter, following persistent invitations to the then incumbent MCE to come on his show to clear some issues, the MCE retorted that he was not accountable to the media but only to the president of the country. The FGD participants could recall just a few occasions, including the one I heard about the toilet debate indicated earlier, when the MCE was put on the spot through an on-air call to respond to certain allegations levelled against his person.

The MCEs' attitude was quite unsurprising because by law and by his appointment by the President, his accountability is more to the president than to the Assembly and the local community, a situation described in detail in Chapters One and Two. It is, however, important not to generalize that all MMDCEs use their legal non-accountability 'immunity' to the local people to shy away from the local media in the manner the MCE of Wenchi did. May be, a nation-wide study is needed to establish the attitude of the MMDCEs in the current regime towards the media through which they can be made answerable for the enormous powers they wield at the Assemblies before a conclusion is drawn on effective or otherwise the media in making the MMDCEs accountable to the local communities. Be that as it may, it seems what can significantly enhance the media's role in that regard is the eventual election of the MMDECs as suggested below by the Legal Officer of the MLGRD:

> You see, as long as the current legal arrangements make the MMDCEs accountable to only the president who appoints them, the media can do little in the name of holding them accountable to the local people. When the accountability arrangements are changed in the law to make the MMDCEs accountable to the local people by making their position elective, they will by all means feel answerable to the electorates. I believe from that point it would be the MMDCEs chasing the media to tell their successes and not the other way round (Interview with Legal Officer, MLGRD, 28/02/2017).

As discussed in Chapter Six, the supposition of the election of the MMDCEs for greater accountability in local governance is underpinned by the theoretical argument espoused that competitive elections at the local government level hold a high potential for greater accountability. Although Grindle (2007) and the other proponents of competitive local governance, have not linked the higher accountability of the elected mayors to the role of the media, it is suggestive that the culture of transparency and accountability would create a favourable environment for the media's accountability role. So, the Legal Officer's suggestion can find validity in the above argument when Ghana's transition to the election of the MMDCEs on partisan basis comes into effect in 2021.

Another apparent weakness in the accountability work of Royals FM was a lack of focus on the monitoring of the Assembly's Development Plans and Budgets. As noted earlier, part of local governance accountability requires authorities to account to citizens on the implementation of the development plans and budgets to enable

them monitor such activities. CR could play this accountability role by tracking the implementation of these policies, which is crucial in updating the public on the successes and the challenges in the implementation. My Key Informant Legal Officer of the MLGRD explained the benefits of this as follows:

> For example, if the Wenchi District Assembly at any point, realized it would be unable to provide certain facilities due to revenue shortfalls, the radio could be useful in revealing the challenges and soliciting public support to resolve the challenges. Royals FM could also monitor the activities in purposely to expose corruption related to the budget in particular (Interview with Legal Officer, MLGRD, 28/02/2017).

However, there was no evidence of this at Royals FM. The Programmes Production Team in the FGDs again attributed this to their lack of adequate knowledge on the development plans as discussed in the previous chapter.

Another key aspect of Royals FM's accountability work worth interrogating is the corruption revelations at the Assembly. The stories point to an ability of the station to expose political corruption within the system and a demonstration of good investigative skills on the part of the news reporters. The investigative processes and the outcomes seemed to follow the description of good watchdogging by Irum Shehreen Ali (2006) cited under Empirical Chapter. Accordingly, an effective watchdogging in fighting corruption takes the form of first creating public awareness on the existence of corruption, pointing out its causes and consequences, and following up with monitoring, investigating and reporting on incidences of corruption. Through this process, corruption is raised as an important governance issues and with the spaces for discussions, the debates can lead to public consensus to fight it. Overall the stories narrated above indicate that nearly all these elements were present in the expose: the people of the Wenchi District got to know of corruption as a reality in their Assembly through Royals FM's reportage, followed with education on effects that resources meant for the improvements of their lives had been diverted for personal use. The public demonstrations triggered by the revelations amplified the people's indignations against the corrupt officials and their resolve to fight the canker of corruption at their Assembly.

However, Royals FM's watchdogging was found to have several down-sides. In spite of the revelations presenting Royals FM as a real force in the fight against corruption at the Wenchi Municipality and that the station's work, for which the station could be a model for emulation by CR stations in Ghana in the fight against the endemic corruption at the MMDAs, there was no clarity on the sustainability of such efforts. Indeed, there was no evidence that there had been many of such revelations, apart from those reported above. It seemed those were the first of their kind in the history of the operations of Royals FM. On an intriguing note, the fact that such a venture was undertaken under the NDC government could be sufficient grounds for reading partisanship motives into the station's reportage as the Traditional Ruler Key Informant did when he indicated in the interview with him

that he suspected that elements of the NPP party were the masterminds of the corruption exposes in an attempt to make the NDC government unpopular in the area. In the words of the Traditional Ruler:

> All those things Royals did last year in the name of exposing corruption at the Wenchi Assembly were under the influences of the MP for the area who is an NPP man. Why is it that this never happened when the NPP Party was in government before the NDC even though Royals FM was operating at that time? In fact, worse corruption took place in our Assembly under the NPP government than what came to light last year. But Royals FM did not bring them out, why? (Interview with Traditional Ruler, 18/02/2017).

This state of affairs was contrary to high public expectations of regular corruption revelations by the station. Interviewees from across the national and community-level respondents stressed unequivocally that the watchdog role of CR was crucial in tackling the canker of corruption in Ghana's local governance and that it should not be compromised upon. In the words of the Legal Officer of the MLGRD, "If a DCE steals money, a CR should report that the DCE has stolen money. Period! The DCEs are not above the laws of the country". Clearest endorsement of Royals FMs exposure of corruption at the Assembly came from the FGDs in the Wenchi Township, where a female participant said:

> What would make us more joyful than to hear on Royals FM every day that it has found bad things at the Assembly? You see, we know so much stealing of our money is going on there, but we want confirmation from Royals FM so that we will show that we don't like what is happening there. Small boys working there buying latest cars... where do they get money to buy those types of cars? Is it not the money meant for water and toilets for we poor people? If Royals FM shames them, they will stop stealing our money (FGD Participant in Wenchi, 21/02/2017)

However, the Traditional Ruler Key Informant threw a caution against what he termed Royals FM going into what he termed dangerous areas by revealing secrets in the society for purposes of accountability. He stressed that as the practice could damage the reputations of prominent persons in the local society, it had a great potential to undermine important Ghanaian socio-cultural values such as the upholding of respect for persons in positions of authority. The Traditional Ruler pointed out for instance that if Royals FM was to do watchdogging like other media, the practice could pose a threat to social harmony since the social effects of each revelation would go beyond the individual victim to affect the larger families of the victim due to the wide familiar tides characterizing the Ghanaian society.

The Traditional Ruler's cautious position that suggests a less desirability of corruption expose by a CR station as Royals FM seemed to have found support in a provision in the Non-partisanship Code of the GCRN relating to the accountability

function of CR in the country's local governance. The Code states in one breadth that " … in being entrusted with a public resource, the airwaves, Community Radio stations have an obligation to hold other public trustees such as the District Assemblies accountable" (GCRN Non-partisanship Code, 2014:4). The above quotation could be taken as an affirmation of the crucial importance of the watchdog function of the GCRN member stations in contributing to accountability in Ghana's local governance. But another breadth of the Code indicates, what can be viewed, as a recommendation of a partnership between CR stations and the MMDAs rather than any adversarial posture. The clause states:

> Community Radio stations shall continue to collaborate ever more actively with District Assemblies as partnership in local development. In particular, they shall promote mutual co-operation towards the non-partisan pursuits of effective decentralization that is equitable and driven by community participation. In this regard, DAs may be further sensitized to the central need for Community Radio stations to maintain their independence for this objective to be achieved (GCRN Non-partisanship Code, 2014: 4).

Although no explanations have been indicated in the GCRN's document for the Network seeming contradiction in the GCRN's Code on accountability role of the community stations at their respective Assemblies, the considerations might not be far-fetched from import of the Traditional Ruler's reservations. However, as the media accountability functions inherently involves the exposures of wrongdoing in society, which calls for robust, aggressive and unflinching attitudes on the part of journalists, it is a tricky situation to reconcile how CR stations can play their accountability role with the upholding of such cherished social values of not exposing the bad deeds of elders.

In any case, the FGDs with Royal FM's programme producers brought value to bear on the controversy when they gave experiences on their investigative reporting. Most of them said they had found watchdogging a dangerous undertaking at the community level because as native reporters, who were well known in the community with social connections, exposing local corruption did not only pose dangers to their safety but could also affect their social relationships. Fortunately, the Communication Expert offered what might be safer approaches to CR watchdogging. Admitting that there were more dangers associated with investigative journalism at the local than at the national level, the Expert suggested that instead of CR stations directly championing the fight against corruption through investigative reporting, they should facilitate community members to do so through strategically designed programmes. This suggestion seemed to find support in the accountability programmes of the station presented above, which opened platforms for community members to express themselves directly their grievances to the Assembly. The suggestion seemed to resonate with social accountability practice on CR-CSOs collaborations, a theme presented in the next sub-section.

Besides the social-cultural factors that potentially threatened the sustainability of the investigative aspect of the accountability function of Royals FM at its local Assembly, it came to light that there were systemic barriers as well. A major one related to the common difficulties journalists in Ghana encounter in obtaining official information, a situation that is to be expected in the absence of a RTIL as indicated in Chapter One. The absence of the RTIL in the country has been of a serious concern because it has hindered access to official information necessary for transparent and accountable governance. An RTI Bill was first drafted in 1999 but was passed into law only in March, 2019 following pressure mounted on the current Parliament by the Media Coalition on Right to Information, a CSO. Even at this point, it remains unclear when the law will become fully operational.

The situation has served to constrain the ability of the media to promote good governance, due to access to public information difficulties. At Royals FM, it was described as a daunting task to obtain official information from the Wenchi Assembly especially what related to wrongdoing. In such cases, the reporters resorted to publications of allegations, a method they thought to have the effect of compelling the officials to come out with the actual facts. But that strategy was led to complaints of unethical practice against the station. For example, the PM describing what he termed non-checking of facts and publication of half-truths, narrated an incident when Royals FM had broadcast a report on a bad bridge on the way to a major farming community in the district. The report sought to create panic that the state of the bridge was hampering the farmers' efforts to bring their foodstuffs to the Wenchi market for sale and resulting in heavy economic losses to the farmers. The story was said to have been based on community members' complaints that alleged that the problem had been reported to District Planning Officer (DPO). The PM of the Assembly continued that public pressure on air compelled him to inform the MCE about the situation, but upon checking with the DPO, it was confirmed that the Officer had never been informed about the matter.

9.3. HOW ROYALS FM IS COLLABORATING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON ACCOUNTABILITY

This section of the chapter focuses on collaborations between Royals FM and CBOs and NGOs. The findings and discussions are anchored on the concept of social accountability this in the Conceptual chapter. Social accountability was defined there, as referring to a broad range of activities undertaken collaboratively by CSOs, public institutions and the media to hold public institutions to account (Wildermuth, 2012; The World Bank, 2006; Malena & McNiel, 2010). As was underscored, social accountability mechanisms have proved particularly useful in the context of local governance, being launched in many developing countries to address several challenges of decentralization as such participation, accountability, and responsiveness. The role of the media in social accountability activities is to disseminate information and to educate the public on the accountability activities as well as to advocate for the adoption of the targeted changes. In the case studies

cited in the chapter on the empirical underpinning of this study, CR stations have been the favourites in many of the social accountability interventions.

9.3.1 FINDINGS

Generally, the relevant literature shows that NGOs and CBOs are ubiquitous in Ghana especially in the rural areas where most people belong to several CBOs existing in their localities. CBOs exist in the form of women groups, credit unions, farmers, transporters, dressmakers and fish mongers associations, cooperative societies, youth clubs, faith-based and women's groups, among many others. Their primary objectives include satisfying the interests of their members but their collective activities and those of the individual members often inure to the good of their communities and the country at large (Opare, 2007). It can, therefore, be asserted that Ghana has sufficiently organized grassroots citizen groups, which are potential viable entities for mobilizing the vast majority of the population to participate in the country's local governance system.

It was found that the Wenchi District hosted numerous NGOs and CBOs. The Municipal Office of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) the body that registers CSOs in Ghana had registered 27 NGOs and 53 CBOs. The records showed that most of these organizations were located in the Wenchi Township but aimed to spread their activities to the whole District.

The NGOs had varying missions and objectives that include women empowerment, combatting HIV/AIDS, promotion of girl-child education and provision of social services like the construction of schools and clinics. A few of them had the promotion of civic education, good governance and democracy as their core objectives. These included the Wenchi District Civic Forum (WDCF), Demand for Good Governance Foundation (DGGF), Centre for the Promotion of Democracy, Good Governance and Development (CPDGD) and *ResourceLink.* However, according to the Municipal Director of the DSW, only about half of the NGOs were active on the ground; many had registered but had not undertaken activities in line with the objectives.

The CBOs included the Wenchi Market Women Association, the Wenchi District Tailors and Dressmakers Association, the Wenchi Transport and Drivers Union, the Christian Women Association and the Wenchi Youth and Development Association (WYDA). Unlike the NGO sector that had largely inactive ones, most of the CBOs were said to have been undertaking activities to meet their objectives. In terms of engagement on local governance issues, WYDA was the only CBO that had good governance promotion as its core mandate.

However, out of the plethora NGOs and CBOs, it was found that only the *ResourceLink* and the WYDA were collaborating with Royals FM on local governance issues in accordance with their respective missions. According to my Key Informant from the *ResourceLink*, the organization was founded in 2013 by a

Belgium-based couple from Wenchi with the mission to promote accountability of the Wenchi DA and other duty-bearers to the people and to deepen public participation in the development process of the area. The main strategy adopted involved organizing interface sessions between the general public and duty-bearers by targeting leaders of identifiable CBOs to enable them present concerns of their members to the Assembly for possible redress. Issues often raised by the people included lack of facilities in the market for the Traders Association, farm inputs for the Famer Associations, and parking spaces for members of the Transporters Association. The *ResourceLink* depended on funding from foreign donations that came through its founders.

Royals FM's area of collaboration with the *ResourceLink* centred on the station serving as the major public communication channel for mobilizing the people to attend the fora and recording the discussions. The themes of the discussions in the public fora formed some of the *Paemuka* accountability programmes discussed earlier in this chapter. Broadcasting the fora discussions served to generate wider discussions and amplified the issues for audience participation that further pressured duty-bearers on their accountability functions. According to my Key Informant, the Programmes' Head of Royals FM, the collaborations with *ResourceLink* had strengthened the accountability programmes.

WYDA was described as a CBO formed by concerned youth of the Wenchi District with the broad objective to mobilize the youth in the area to support the development agenda of the District. Its main strategy was to use Royals FM to discuss issues on community development with a special focus on collaborating with the station to exact accountability from the local authorities. The main strategy adopted involved WYDA and Royals FM undertaking joint investigations on allegations of corruption at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly with some members of the Association who were working at the Assembly serving as whistle-blowers. Armed with such information, WYDA would officially write to the Assembly to come clean on the allegations. As part of investigations WYDA would request information from funding agencies on donor funded projects. Regarding the moves as helping them to get value for money, the donors would readily make available the information requested. The Key Informants from WYDA recalled an incident in which their information-seeking revealed some fraudulent acts at the Assembly. In one of them, the Assembly had informed stakeholders that it had received a financial grant of close to seventy thousand Ghana Cedis (Ghc70, 000.00) from the World Bank for the construction of a lorry parking in the Wenchi Township. But WYDA found that the money was actually ninety thousand Ghana Cedis (Ghc 90,000.00). There were other revelations on inflations of contract sums, such as those on market sheds of the Wenchi New market and a police building at Tremeso, a village outside the Wenchi town. The facts would then be put in the public domain through Royals FM.

9.3.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the evidence adduced, Royal FM's collaborations with the *ResourceLink* and WYDYA were contributing to a level of accountability at the Wenchi Municipal Assembly and to the overall development of the area. Particularly, through the town hall meetings organized by the *ResourceLink*, the Local Government Authorities could tap into the inputs and potentials of CBOs to create enabling policies that would support the activities of these organizations, which formed the bedrock of the local economy and provided the bulk of local taxes. The corruption revelations by WYAD in conjunction with Royals had the effect of reducing financial loss at the Assembly thereby making resources available for improving the lives of the people.

However, relating the findings to the social accountability practices discussed in the Empirical Section, there were critical gaps in the above collaborations between Royals FM and the two CSOs. The success of the cases cited rested on two main factors, which were lacking in my study context.

One was the lack of involvement of relevant state institutions in the collaborations. Scholars including McNeil and Mumvuma (2006) stress that the involvement of the state in social accountability activities is important to reduce apprehension by governments' agencies about the motives of the activities and to build understanding and co-operation amongst the various stakeholders as a basis for pursuing the objectives of the activities. This was not the case in my study as the activities did not involve the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. Especially the WYDA seemed to have positioned itself simply as a watchdog looking for thieves at the Assembly. It was, therefore, unsurprising that the operations of the two organizations were viewed with suspicion. In interviews with the *ResourceLink*, the Traditional Ruler and the PM of the Assembly, it emerged that the two organizations had credibility questions relating to their origin and the motivations of their operation. My *ResourceLink* Key Informant said a large section of the public in the Wenchi Municipal District particularly supporters of the NDC party, perceived the Organization to be a brainchild of agents of the NPP Party. Accordingly, the MP of the Wenchi Constituency was said to have formed the organization at the time the NDC Party was in government with the motivation to use it to downsize the popularity of the NDC in the area by undertaking activities that revealed inefficiencies in the Assembly. The partisan perception was shared by the PM of the Assembly who alleged that the activities of the *ResourceLink* were linked to the MP. The PM, therefore, wondered whether the organization would continue on its current tangent now that the NPP government had won power in the 2016 General Elections. WYDA was similarly tagged politically. The PM of the Assembly again thought the organization was formed by the local Youth Wing of the NPP Party to pursue the party's agenda.

It is important to note that even though the allegations of the political leanings of two organizations could not be verified from an independent source, the overall implications of their political partisan coloration of the activities on governance and

their collaborations with Royals FM, did not only portray the organizations as a non-neutral players in the affairs of Wenchi Municipal Assembly, but also seemed to reinforce the partisanship claims levelled against Royals FM in the previous chapter of this study.

It is pertinent to add that the claims of partisanship contrasts with the literature on the successful social accountability studies cited in the Empirical section, which underscores the importance of CSOs and the media holding themselves up as politically neutral entities so as to guarantee public confidence in their activities. Unfortunately in Ghana, many CSOs, like the media are perceived to have been associated with political partisanship, being founded or sponsored by politicians or by political parties. Such organizations are meant to be conduits for mobilizing political support from grassroots people for the politicians or the political parties, using their developmental mandates as disguise (Gyima-Boadi & Debrah, 2008). These 'political-NGOs', cannot be politically neutral entities in pursuing the public good.

The other critical ingredient in the case studies in the Empirical chapter is a high level of civil society organization with technical and advocacy skills as well as the ability to use the media. This factor was lacking in my study context as the two organizations as well as Royals FM apparently had weak capacities on policy issues. This could explain why it could not be found on the ground evidence on a focus of the collaborations on policy issues. My key informants from the *ResourceLink* and the WYDA confirmed that their engagement did not focus on the Development Plans and Budgets of the Assembly due to a lack of the know-how in the areas. These findings can be linked to what analysts term the ineffective role of civil society in Ghana's local governance and the apparent ineffectiveness of the media to initiate partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) on local governance issues. Although, civil society in Ghana is growing in strength and its influence on national governance issues is generally felt, this is less the case in local governance. Indeed, studies report of a weak civil society and its organizations in most rural districts that lack the capacity to engage in local governance activities (see for example, King et al., 2013; Asante, 2013). While CSOs are active in the urban areas, their activities become weaker at the sub-assembly level (King et al., 2013). The phenomenon has made Asante to comment:

> While space has been made available for civil society engagements with government to promote good governance and effective service delivery, the space is dominated by powerful civil CSOs located in a few regional capitals to the detriment of local level actors (King et al., 2013:172).

The picture that emerges is that at the local level, civil society actors are unable to hold public officials accountable and lack the requisite skills to engage with service providers. In addition, it is unclear if local media including CR stations in Ghana are capable of facilitating strategic partnerships with CSOs on local governance issues.

From the above limitations on both the part of CSOs and the media to forge strategic partnerships on local governance issues, it would seem unrealistic to expect social accountability at Royals FM that meets the best practice standards presented in the examples in the Empirical chapter. What this study suggests as a more feasible approach is to broaden or develop the current state of collaborations. For example, Royals FM can create a system of programmes for many more of the local organizations and make the leaders the producers of the programmes. The station becomes an outlet for the community organizations and its primary role is to facilitate the spontaneous participation of these organizations. Each of these programmes of local organizations can hammer on the lack of services, government neglect, elite dominance, among others. This would be enough to affect local government officials and make them more accountable. Royals FM's position would be likened to the leader of a group discussion who is trying to create a process of participatory, dialogical communication in the group.

However, in Ghana, it seems a spontaneous participation of community groups and organizations in CR does cannot come easy for a number of reasons. Fundamentally, it seems from a dearth of evidence on CR-CSOs collaborations that local organizations have never been made to feel part of the agenda of the community stations in serving their communities. Besides, as can be seen in the case of Royals FM, both the CR and CSOs sectors lack capacity and have operational challenges that limit their collaborative efforts. For instance, while these NGOs and CBOs lack funding to contribute to meet the cost of programme production, CR stations on their side, apart from their lack of knowledge to involve local organizations in their work, are driven by their resource scarcity to demand financial contributions from these cash-strapped organizations. In the light of this, my study proposes a proactive approach to instituting CR-CSOs collaborations that can be adopted by CR in Ghana as a whole. The collaborations would have the following main elements:

a. CR stations should grant free airtime to local NGOs and CBOs;
b. CR stations should facilitate the training of representatives of the organizations in programme production skills;
c. CR stations should make available technical and other production facilities to the organizations to produce programmes;
d. On their part, the organizations would provide support material and resources such as tapes and transport for producers;
e. Since the need for resources cannot be ignored, CR and local organizations would jointly seeking funding for their activities.

9.4 HOW ROYALS FM IS PROMOTING RESPONSIVENESS IN THE WENCHI MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

This last part of the four section- series of the chapter focuses on examining programmes that were found at Royals FM aimed to exact the Wenchi Municipal

Assembly responsiveness to the development needs of the people in the area. The findings, analysis and discussions are done within two frameworks.

The first is based on the concepts of responsiveness as an indicator of good local governance and the good agenda-setting functions of the media, respectively defined earlier as referring to the responsibility of government to meet the needs of citizens timely and efficiently, and the media ability to draw decision-makers' attention to urgent social problems and pressuring government to respond to same.

The second basis relates to the responsibilities reposed on the MMDAs in Ghana's local governance system to become responsive to the needs of local communities. As discussed in Chapter One, the Draft Decentralization Policy Framework (DDPF) and the National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAL) both of 2010, mandate the MMDAs to provide timely, effective and efficient delivery of services in the areas of basic education, primary health care, environmental hygiene, municipal transport, waste management, market management, lorry part administration and settlement planning. To operationalize the developmental mandate of the district assemblies, legislative instrument (LI) of 2009 has decentralized all national level Departments that are responsible for the delivery of these services to operate as Departments of the DAs. The DACF provides the resource base for the operations of the MMDAs.

In spite of these, there has been still been an enduring story of marginalization among rural populations. Studies show that many villages still lack basic amenities. For example, a GCRN'S document dubbed "The People's Manifesto", carries the voices of people from 12 different communities located across the country crying for improved basic services. The message from the communities was clear and consistent:

> We need water, we need electricity, we need roads, we need clinics, we need schools. Such small, such basic demands. Why this recurrent and enduring story of marginalization? Why, after 55 years of independence and promises? What our communities are asking for is what Decentralization should Deliver! Our 1992 Constitution calls for effective decentralization! (GCRN, 2012).

The pleas were captured through a participatory community research involving 12 selected community stations and their listening communities. The study was meant to inform the broadcast of member stations for wider dialogue and consensus among their listening communities for development-driven elections in the 2012 General Elections. Whilst the voices of the rural communities did not claim that there is no development at all in rural communities, they suggested that there is a big room for improvement in the lives of the majority of the populations of the country who live in rural areas.

The central argument here, therefore, is that the CR stations in Ghana, including Royals FM can be effective mobilizers of marginalized people for exacting responsiveness from their MMDAs.

9.4.1 FINDINGS

The key development challenges in the Wenchi Municipal Area gathered from across the categories of the study respondents can be summarized in terms of inadequate and poor conditions of education, health, sanitation facilities as well as poor road networks especially in the more rural communities. In the area of health, there were said to be a few hospitals and quite a number of clinics and health centres, but they were largely poorly equipped with essential facilities and personnel. As one moved into numerous village communities, these facilities were largely unavailable.

Ensuring good sanitation was described as a daunting task for the Assembly. Most of the residents of the Wenchi Township depended on public latrines, which were not only woefully inadequate in number, but were described as being in terrible conditions. The state of affairs was compelling many residents to resort to open defecation, compounding the already poor environmental conditions littered with all kinds of waste material.

The situation of educational services was pretty like those in the areas of health and sanitation. While the township could boast of a good number of basic school facilities, many villages still lacked these. To worsen the situation, most village schools were poorly staffed. For example, the Agubie Primary school had only two teachers teaching all the six classes. This, according to the community members, was negatively affecting teaching and learning.

Evidence available shows that Royals FM had been an agent of change by addressing the myriad of development challenges in the community. The accountability programmes discussed in the previous section served a double purpose of making the Assembly answerable for the neglect of their responsibilities and to pressure the authorities to improve services. It is needless to repeat the said programmes here but discuss their impact as done below. The said programmes notwithstanding, there was a programme that deserves special attention. This was titled Titled, *Ye Kyin Yen Saasi* (We have Toured the Community), a weekly programme designed to focus attention on sanitation as a top concern to the people of the Wenchi Municipality.

Ye Kyin Yen Saasi was broadcast on Saturday mornings focused on the poor sanitation situation particularly hammering on the need to stop the widespread practice of open defecation and littering with waste materials. On the annual UN World Toilet Days, a special panorama was aired on the lack of toilet facilities and the poor conditions of existing ones using communities across the district. A significant outcome of the campaign strategy was that political parties were

compelled to make the improvement of environmental sanitation a top campaign issue. In the 2016 elections, in particular, parliamentary candidates vying for the Wenchi Constituency seat had to factor into their manifesto pledges to find innovative ways to tackle the sanitation menace in the area. The NPP parliamentary candidate who won the election, pledged to build 100 toilets if voted into power. At the time of the data the collection, I was told that contracts had been awarded for the construction of the facilities, which were to be undertaken in phases and expected to be completed by the next elections in 2020.

In a related development the Wenchi Municipal Assembly had to bow to pressure from Royals FM to open a toilet facility for public use. It emerged from the FGDs with producers and presenters that the main electrical power producer of Ghana, the Volta River Authority (VRA), as part of its social responsibilities had built the toilet facility in a central place in the township. The facility, which was to replace a dilapidated one, had been handed over to the authorities at the Assembly to be commissioned for public use. But this was not done until the outbreak of a cholera epidemic in 2015. A man of 28 years died of the disease whilst many infected persons were on admission at the hospital. The majority of the sick resided in areas close to the dilapidated toilet. Royals FM used the weekly sanitation programme to throw light on the supposed neglect, directing public indignation that compelled immediate opening of the new toilet facility for public use.

Ye Kyin Yen Saasi did not only serve as a platform for educating the people on their right to quality services of education, health, sanitation, among others and emboldened them to complain about the lack of same, but also urged the people to observe good personal hygiene and environmental sanitation practices. Availing the microphone to ordinary people to voice their own complaints directed against the lack of services, duty bearers were often constrained to respond. In the interviews and FGDs with community members it came to light that some health, education and sanitation facilities as well extension of electricity supply to outlying communities, among others were provided by the Wenchi Assembly as a result of Royals FM's programmes.

A participant in the community FGDs in Wenchi confirmed the provision of a urinal and a kindergarten for a new market for the Zongo Area, a predominantly immigrant settlement saying:

> We the market women were crying every Wednesday on the *Paemuk*a programme on Royals FM that we didn't have a place of convenience and that our pre-school children did not have a school. Last year, our cries forced the Assembly for the area to also cry to the Assembly on our behalf and now we are happy that we now have them. We thank Royals FM for giving us poor women the chance to fight for ourselves (Participant in FGD in Wenchi, 21/02/2018).

The public education was seeing a gradual positive change of public attitude towards environmental sanitation, which was said to be contributing to reduced cases of in infectious diseases like malaria and diarrhoea being recorded at health facilities.

9.4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The above discussions have established clearly the power of Royals FM to contribute to government responsiveness through dedicated attention to issues pertaining to the lack of government services. However, the data indicated that there remained a lot more to be done to improve services. According to the PM, the Assembly was ever saddled with a lot of developmental challenges particularly in the more rural villages, most of which were still in dire need of basic amenities. The respondents in FGDs in the Agubie and Akete villages testified to the situation. According to the FGD Participants in the Akete village their community was in dire need of a clinic and potable water. They also complained of poor road network, saying that a footbridge on their only road to the Wenchi town was in a dilapidated condition.

At Agubie, there was no health centre and the women respondents complained of having to walk over five kilometres to a neighbouring community for antenatal services, a situation that was said to account for increasing maternal mortality in the area.

The PM explained that the certain factors were constraining the responsiveness of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. The main one was said to be insufficient funding as compared to the enormous task of development and explained that the issue of funding had several dimensions. The major one was said to be delay in the release of the DACF by central government. Accordingly, the Common Fund was in arrears for the last three quarters, thereby delaying the implementation of development projects. Another aspect of the problem related to the central government control of the development plans and budgets of the MMDAs, a situation discussed in Chapter Two, where it was noted that in as much the MMDAs are empowered to formulate their plans and budgets, central government decides what projects to approve for implementation.

Many critics of the situation, including (Ahwoi, 2017) argue that very often, the choices of government as to which projects to implement from the plans were driven by political expediency in terms of what can win votes and where. This observation seemed to have been confirmed at the study site. According to the PM of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly, a greater part of the approved budgets under the John Mahama led NDC government that ruled the country from 2012 to 2016, had targeted rural electrification. This was because the electrification of rural areas appeared to fall in line with government policy as a means of winning votes from the rural areas in the 2016 Elections. As such, the two village communities in the study were found to have been hooked to the national electricity grid. But according

to the FGD participants in the two communities, electricity was the least of their priority needs in comparison with their basic needs mentioned earlier.

What the above analysis means is that in as much the media such as Royals FM can influence local government responsiveness the centralization of policy decisions in Ghana's local governance system will always present a significant constraint. In fact, the Communication Scholar had alluded to this when he argued that:

> The media cannot affect some of the developmental challenges at the local level because those challenges are rooted structural issues... For example, central government directs the MMDAs on how to spend their share of the District Assembly's Common Fund, the media highlighting certain challenges that are outside central government priorities may not affect some of these structural barriers (Interview with Communication Expert 27/02/2017).

The Legal Officer suggested in the interview with him that in the light of the current political constraints to the implementation of the relevant laws on government responsiveness, a way to ameliorate the MMDAs's financial predicaments would be the stepping up of efforts to increase local revenue. He explained that since the MMDAs were at liberty to spend the IGF without central government interferences, increased revenue would enable them carry out development projects according to the local priorities. This suggestion is in principle, a laudable one because as noted in Chapter Two, the DACF was to be supplemented by locally generated revenue by the MMDAs. However, revenue generation by the MMDAs has been an area fraught with challenges due to several factors. Particularly for rural areas, the main one is their weak economic base. According to the PM for the Wenchi Municipal Area, the Assembly had hardly met its revenue targets due to the difficulty of collecting taxes. There are three main contributory factors to this state of affairs. Added to the relatively fewer sources of revenue as compared to more affluent Metropolitan and some Municipal Assemblies, was reluctance on the part of citizens to pay taxes. The low sense of civic responsibility discussed in the previous sub-section where people were said to be unwilling to pay taxes, was fuelled by the widely held perception of corruption at the MMDAs. On corruption, a FG participant at Akete expressed this situation as follows:

> Our taxes are used to buy fine cars for the DCEs ...some of it stolen by the revenue collectors. That is why we don't want to pay taxes to the Assembly anymore...The government can arrest people and put us into prison, but many will still not want to pay taxes that only go to improve the lives of others (FG Partcipant at Agubie, 17/02/2017).

The above statement affirms the point raised in the Conceptual chapter that corruption in local governance has dire consequences on development. In Ghana's case, it contributes to the resource scarcity syndrome at the MMDAs, which impacts negatively on the provision of much needed development services. But this

situation underscores the imperativeness of the watchdog function of local media like Royals FM in combatting the canker, in spite of the challenges associated of this discussed earlier.

In spite of the above mixture of challenges, most participants of Akete and Agubie FGDs expressed their belief that Royals FM could have played a significant role in getting the Assembly to act on some of their development problems, had it not been due to what they termed the station's neglect of the villages in the Municipal area. The participants claimed that the station had paid no attention their issues, compared to what it had been doing for the Wenchi Township. A participant from the Agubie community who said she used to be a regular caller into the station's programmes complained of how she had had on several occasions invited Royals FM to report on the village's challenges to no avail. One participant in the FDG at Akete even indicated that she did not consider Royals FM as a CR station it was failing to speak for the villages. "For me, Royals FM is like all the radio stations ... talking about things that happen in the towns and not about those that affect we the poor villagers" (Focus Group Participant in Agubie, 17/02/2017). For this alleged neglect, many of the participants in that village said they had even stopped tuning into the station in protest.

The complaints from the Akete and Agubie villages did not only underscore a belief the people had in the power of Royals FM to intervene and get their DA to act to solve the development challenges of their communities, but also their frustrations at the inability of the radio station to take up their issues. On Royals FM's part, in earlier interviews with the team of programme producers and reporters as well as the Executive Director of Royals FM, it was admitted that their outreach activities had largely been limited to the Wenchi Township primarily due to logistical, financial and personnel constraints. The station had a single motor bike for its field work and getting it fuelled on a daily basis was a problem because the station did not have enough money. The reporters mostly walked around town for the field programmes and since most of them were volunteers, it would be too demanding on the part of the station to stretch its outreach activities into the villages.

The above situation seems to have re-echoed the validity of the issues of sustainability and ownership challenges discussed in the previous chapter. Since the people in Wenchi clearly appreciated the stations role in their community, it implies that deep sense of community ownership could translated into practical efforts towards the sustainability of Royals FM could have been made by the community members. Financially, the people could contribute money to the station to do more work, such as extending its outreach programmes to the outlying villages. Social sustainability could be in the form of stepping up volunteerism. For example, there could have been a network of volunteer village correspondents whereby every community and ward in the broadcast area would have had one or two local correspondents reporting news from these communities, not just reports to be read but live interviews with voices from the grassroots. The aim would have been to hear from every ward at least once a week or more often so that news of every sector

of the audience will be heard very frequently. Priority would have been given to progress reports on community development projects or problems that should be addressed by government or other service agencies. However, the feasibility of this suggestion would be shot down by the low sense of community ownership of CR in Ghana as a whole as discussed earlier.

A conclusion that can be drawn for this sub-chapter is that Royals FM has proven its potentials to significantly address the issue of responsiveness by pressuring the Wenchi Municipal Assembly to improve on services of education, health and sanitation, amongst others. However, its impact has been limited to the Wenchi Township due to logistical constraints. Similarly the Wenchi Municipal Assembly has been constrained by inadequate local resource mobilization and the central government control of the DACF.

9.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter forms the second of the two-chapter series on the empirical results of the study. The focus of the chapter is to provide ample response to the second research question to be answered by the study: How is Royals FM tacking pertinent issues in local governance in the Wenchi Municipal District? The findings provided ample insight into how programmes organized by Royals FM engender citizen participation, accountability and responsiveness in the Wenchi Municipality as well as constraints in those regards. The chapter has four sections with each focusing on one of the broad thematic areas of participation, accountability and

This first section examined Royals FM's broadcast that sought to promote citizen participation with special focus on policy making and civic related activities. The analysed has been done based on the civic-forum function of the media. The findings revealed that there was no lack of focus on programmes that facilitated public debates through which people could make inputs into the budgets and planning processes of the Assembly. Lack of knowledge on such programmes and weak capacities on both the part of the radio station and the Wenchi Assembly accounted for the situation. Two suggestions by the Communication Expert and the Legal officer of the MLGRD were presented as useful guide on how CR could strategically enable local people make inputs to the planning and budgeting processes of the Assembly. But it was found that Royals FM had established programmes on civic education that impacted citizens' knowledge on their rights to demand accountability from duty-bearers, although those programmes apparently neglected education to address apathy towards tax paying and participation in communal labour, two critical areas.

The second sub-chapter focused on the accountability role of Royals FM in the local Assembly analysed with the framework of the watchdog role of the media. The findings revealed several innovative programmes that did not only significantly facilitate communication between the Assembly officials, but also held the Assembly persons and the Wenchi Assembly as a whole accountable to the local

communities. These programmes include those that brought the Assembly persons on air to be questioned on the performance of their responsibilities to their electorates and those that highlighted the Assembly's neglect of its responsibilities to the people. There was a general agreement among the study respondents that the programmes were making impact particularly in helping the Assembly persons to meet their constitutional mandate to maintain regular contacts account with the communities. But the findings lacked evidence of Royals FM's ability to exact similar accountability from the MCE in terms of his role at the Assembly due to the upward accountability to the centre.

There was evidence of the potential of Royals FM to expose corruption at the Assembly through investigative reporting. The evidence was based on a story on the revelation of financial corruption, but there was no evidence of similar exposes in the past: a situation that led to speculations of political motives influencing the accountability agenda of the station. There were uncovered certain vital constraints to the station's accountability efforts that include difficulties in accessing public information from the Assembly and a divided perception about the relevance of the station's watchdog work as a CR. It has to be admitted that most of these challenges cannot be addressed in the short time, notably, the cultural issues and the attitude of the MCE. What is within immediate hope is a speedy passage of the RTI Bill into law to facilitate easy access to information.

The third sub-chapter centred on collaborations between Royals FM and local organizations to promote accountability at the Wench Assembly in line with the social accountability approach. It was found that there were virtually no CSOs with adequate knowledge and capacities to undertake effective social accountability activities on the participation, accountability and responsiveness programmes of the radio station. Out of numerous NGOs and CBOs in the area, only a few of them had governance related objectives, and out of these, only two were collaborating with the radio station on governance issues. The approaches of the collaborations had a common focus of exposing corruption and wrongdoings at the Assembly rather involving the local government units in the activities to gain their confidence and collaborations. Consequently, the approaches yielded some positive outcomes, the activities were viewed by a section of the study participants as politically motivated. Two recommendations were made towards improving social accountability that involved effective collaborations between Royals FM and CSOs. As a short to medium term measure Royals FM should resort to the allocation of air time to the numerous CBOs and to facilitate them to focus programming on local governance issues. A long-term one would the building of the capacities of the Royals FM and the local CSOs in social accountability.

The findings and discussions on this section focused on programmes on Royals FM that sought to mobilize the people to pressure the Assembly to fulfil its developmental mandate in providing their basic needs. There was ample evidence of such programmes and their impact on the most pressing issues that included sanitation, health and education in terms of improvements such services.

However, it was found that a number of constraints on the side of both Royals FM and the Wenchi Assembly were constraining efforts to fully meet the development challenges. On the side of the Assembly, there was insufficient funding to provide facilities that citizens demanded through Royals with the results that the people as village communities in particular were still lacking basic amenities needed for decent living standards. The financial problems had two main dimensions, one related to perennial delays in the release of the DACF, the main source of funding for development, and central government control of the resources and directives, which have the combined effects of delays in the implementation of projects or the undertaking of projects that often deviated from the priority needs in the plans and budgets. The other aspect related local revenue mobilization. Local revenue is supposed to serve as a major supplement to the Common Fund, but a weak economic base of rural districts such as Royals FM and unwillingness of local people to pay revenue rendered that option an unreliable source of funding for accelerated development.

Royals FMs limitations were also found to be related to its financial and social problems. The station needs money and vehicles for its outreach programmes that proved to be most effective in exposing problems and eliciting government action to solve them, but such resources were relatively fewer than what is needed for the tasks. As such, despite the fact established that the villagers were reposing trust in Royals FM to expose their plight and push the Assembly to respond to them, the village respondents complained bitterly about their areas never being visited by Royals FM reporters, describing the situation as too discriminatory for a community station.

Here, Royals FM's limitations were viewed in the context the ownership and sustainability discourse discussed in earlier sections with the main argument that the financial challenges constraining the ability of the station to impact equally its community could have been be mitigated with financial contributions from the community and a high spirit of volunteerism if there was a favourable communal spirit.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding chapter presents the conclusions, policy interventions and recommendations from this study. The overarching focus of the study is the exploration of how CR can address some issue-based areas related to efforts aimed at building good governance practices at the local level of Ghana. Royals FM, a GCRN member station, operating at Wenchi District Assembly area of Brong-Ahafo Region was investigated in relation to its role in addressing the specific issues of participation, accountability and responsiveness.

This is situated in literature that claims that CR has been singled out as the linchpin for good governance and development for grassroots, marginalized and poor societies across the globe, largely due to its pro-poor, development-oriented, participatory philosophy and prioritization of the voices and concerns of grassroots communities, among its key characteristics (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Carpenter et al., 2009; Jallov, 2012). It is against this backdrop that Ghana implemented a decentralization programme in 1987 in line with a world-wide movement to promote good governance by bringing governance closer to ordinary people. The laws on Ghana's decentralization explicitly state that the main purpose of the programme is to promote good governance at the local level that stresses citizen participation in decision-making, accountability of the MMDAs to the local communities and making MMDAs responsive the development needs of the people. However, studies have shown a widespread dissatisfaction with the state of civil society involvement in decision making at the DAs and accountability of the Assemblies to the communities as well as limited responsiveness of DAs to the development needs of the citizens (Ayee, 2010; MLGRD, 2010; Akudugu et al., 2012, Asante, 2013; Mumin, 2014).

A closer analysis of the problems of the ineffective participation, accountability and responsiveness reveal that they are structurally rooted in a top-down design of Ghana's decentralization, a situation that facilitates centre-level control of key decision making and the recapturing of resources (Ayee, 2004; Ofei-Abogye, 2008; Ahwoi, 2010). In effect, while local communities can elect representatives to the DAs, funding and effective permissions are given exclusively to the DCEs from the central government and development planning and budgeting are controlled by national government through respective ministries. Meanwhile, the DCEs, who wield so much power over the DAs, are un-elected and are legally accountable only to their appointing authority, the president. In addition, there are other issues that hamper the effective realisation of the objectives of Ghana's decentralization programme. A main one discussed in Chapter Two includes corruption at the MMDAs that results in massive loss of resources meant for development.

The constraining realities of the centre-level control of Ghana's local governance notwithstanding, the central thesis of this study posits that the problems of participation, accountability and responsiveness are linked to a weakness in communication. This situation has been discussed in two dimensions. One relates to ineffectiveness of the Assembly Members who are mandated by law to serve as a vital communication link between the MMDAs and their electorates, through which they could facilitate local community inputs into decision-making as well as serve the main mechanism agents. The second factor relates to an ineffective role of the media, particularly the mainstream public and commercial radio stations in promoting the country's decentralization programme for effective local governance. Studies suggest that this attitude of the media can be linked to commercial and partisan considerations.

It is against this background that this study questions the ability of Royals FM to address the issues of participation, accountability and responsiveness in the Wenchi Municipal area. Two-pronged research questions were formulated as an aid to achieve both the main and specific objectives of the study.

10.1. HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS PERCEIVE THE ROLE OF CR IN GHANA'S LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

As my first question of the study, I discussed the perceptions of stakeholders of local governance and of CR on the role of CR in Ghana's local governance, within the context of the pluralistic broadcasting system in the country. The findings from this research have highlighted a key issue of policy and theoretical importance. CR has unique advantages in the media's governance role over other types of radio embedded in its core principles, which can be exploited when they are fully adhered to. The features are community ownership, non-profit and non-partisan orientation and character, as well as its exclusive use of indigenous languages. Each of these themes is taken up in the foregoing.

10.1.1. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE AS AN ADVANTAGE

This section under the question discussed the community ownership principles of CR and how the stakeholders' understandings of the term influenced their perceptions on the role of CR in local governance. The findings here underscore two issues.

Firstly, I have demonstrated that the stakeholders understand the ownership principle of CR as a key advantage in its local governance; the communal ownership of a radio station provides a crucial fundamental basis for mobilizing and empowering the community of a CR station to formulate operational policies that would focus on the most critical developmental areas of the community. In the

policy making, local governance issues are likely to take centre-stage in the programming of a community station, since local governance is the locus of community development, which is the prime agenda of CR. This implies desirability for authentic CR, where the community would take charge of the management and operational policymaking, a condition that generates a high sense of ownership that guarantees public trust and confidence as well as sustainability.

But secondly, this study has revealed a contrary situation in the case of not only Royals FM, but most CR stations in Ghana. Rather than being initiated, established, owned and managed by the communities as is the traditional model of CR, the CR stations in Ghana have been established by individuals, groups or organizations with the policymaking bodies, the ECs consisting of handpicked members who have monopolized their portfolios since the founding of the stations. There are neither structures for accountability of the stations and the ECs to the communities nor opportunities for democratic decision-making. The overall effect is a waning public trust and confidence expressed in non-recognition of the decisions of these ECs as reflecting the collective interests of the communities with a low sense of community ownership of the stations underpinning it. This state of affairs has largely accounted for sustainability challenges bedevilling community stations in the country, which goes to constrain their potential to pursue local governance agenda to the full.

Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, my research has unearthed important legal and policy issues undermining the development of broadcasting in Ghana, which have serious implications for the CR sector development and constrain the ability of the community stations in championing good local governance. These, respectively, are the absences of a Broadcasting Law (BL) and a Right to Information Law (RTIL). I have consistently held that the absence of a clear legal framework for broadcasting in the over twenty years after the commencement of broadcasting plurality in the country, has largely accounted for the less than authentic CR. Based on this observation, I recommended the speedy passage of the Broadcasting Bill that has been pending in Parliament into a law. I have posited in particular that the BL portending to establish an enabling environment for the development of CR should provide a policy framework on the core principles of CR. For the ownership principle, the policies should provide for community involvements in management and accountability to the communities as means of generating greater sustainability as in the South African example cited earlier. As I have established, the legal void presents real opportunities for operators of CR to violate, if not to abuse some of the values of CR such as the community ownership deficiencies exposed. In conclusion, it is plausible to assert that without such robust legal provisions, no conditions, including the GCRN's policies, can be trustworthy in effecting changes to the prevailing situation. The fuller legal implications of the BL and the RTIL in the promotion of true and sustainable CR sector in the country better positioned for a good governance agenda, have been elaborated in the subsequent sub-sections of the chapter.

10.1.2. THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT PRINCIPLE

As the second principle identified by the study participants as having a bearing on their perceptions of the role of CR in Ghana's local governance, I discussed the principle here. The findings have highlighted the following important issues.

Firstly, I have demonstrated that the main advantage of non-profit principle for its governance role lies in resource availability for local governance programming, an expectation that is based on the profit reinvestment inherent in the principle. Linking this to the community ownership principle, when community members prioritize local governance for their station, substantial resources will be directed into that area.

Secondly, the study revealed controversies and misunderstandings surrounding the non-profit status of Royals FM. Whilst a section of the respondents appreciated that Royals FM was adhering to the principle by the allocation of free air time for the local governance programmes and for other free services, others did not trust that the founder and EC of the station were not using the station to make money for themselves whilst pretending they were serving the community. This latter group was made up of the remote village communities who were aggrieved that Royals FM did not report on their development problems to possibly attract the attention of stakeholders purportedly due to financial challenges. This state of affairs raises questions on financial public accountability as it is clear that Royals FM lacks accountability to the community as is the situation of most of the GCRN's stations. This has in turn negatively impacted their financial sustainability because CR thrives on financial contributions from its community as supplement to its income from other sources but the communities of the stations in Ghana have expressed unwillingness to contribute financially towards the stations operations in spite of their recognition of the vital importance of the stations.

Thirdly, I have established a window of hope and opportunity in the BL to address the controversies surrounding the non-profit status of CR in Ghana and for that matter, the financial sustainability issues. On condition that the Law has clear policies on public financial accountability for the community stations, it would boost public confidence to contribute financially towards the sustainability of the stations. Since the Broadcasting Bill provides for Public Funding for community broadcasting, the Law will enhance the sustainability of the stations as in the cases of Denmark, France and South, among other countries.

10.1.3. THE NON-PARTISANSHIP OF COMMUNITY

Perceptions on the non-partisan nature of CR and its implications on the local role of the medium was discussed. The findings have provided the following fresh insights. Firstly, it has been demonstrated that the non-partisanship principle is perhaps, the most significant influencer on the perceptions of the community of a CR station on the stations local governance engagement in a politically polarized media

environment as Ghana. The non-partisan ethos of a CR is a key generator of public trust in its local governance agenda and underscores the need for strict adhere to the principle.

Secondly, however, there were allegations of partisanship against Royals FM raised by a section of the study respondents, including the Traditional Ruler Key Informant who belongs to an institution that is reposed with non-partisanship status in Ghana's Constitution. The allegations were to the effect that Royals FM was maintaining a posture of favouritism towards a particular political party and some individual candidates during national and local elections. Backed by other studies on GCRN's stations revealing a country-wide phenomenon where the political neutrality of the stations has been called to question in spite of the GCRN's Non-partisan Codes of Conduct, the situation is a disturbing one. It creates the impression that CR in Ghana, after all, is not free from the politically partisan tag placed on the Ghanaian media and cannot be relied upon to engage in governance taking a non-partisan position.

Thirdly, I have demonstrated that the partisanship issues of CR in Ghana can be addressed through a functional BL. A legal or regulatory framework that defines and ensures adherence to the non-partisan ethos by the CR stations is crucial in building public confidence in the ability of the CR stations to maintain their non-partisanship in their governance engagements.

10.1.4. EXCLUSIVE LOCAL LANGUAGE USAGE

As the exclusive use of indigenous languages came up as a significant influencer of the respondents perceptions on the role of CR in local governance. Important learning points highlight are:

Firstly, the exclusive local language use by CR present it as an important advantage in overcoming communication barriers in Ghana's local governance system that have been identified as practically undermining public involvement in local governance discourses. Since virtually all the key policy documents of the MMDAs, including the development plans and budgets, have been written in English, and since the majority of the rural population is still illiterate, CR station's local governance programmes in the indigenous languages present viable opportunities for these marginalized sectors of the Ghanaian society to participate in the governance programmes.

Secondly, although the GCRN enjoins the use of the indigenous languages by its member stations as their key hallmark and has established that the GCRN's programming Code on the use of the local languages, this study and others have found that the workers of CR stations in Ghana are handicapped in the authentic use of the local vernaculars. Other studies have found that most local language radio stations in Ghana face a similar challenge. On Royals FM, this situation was found to be one of the factors accounting for the lack of programmes on the Assembly's

development policies because the workers lacked the competence for translating the issues from English to the local language.

Thirdly, this study proposes medium and long-term measures for addressing the language problems in broadcasting in Ghana in general, and CR in particular. In the medium-term, local language broadcasting stations including CR should seek opportunities for capacity building for the workers by involving experts in the various languages from academic and other institutions. For instance, in-house training programmes can be regularly organized for presenters with resource persons from the Ghana Institute of Languages and local language experts and linguists. The long-term measure would involve stepping up attention to promote local language learning in the academic institutions so as to equip the students with adequate skills in the use of the languages for the socio-cultural development of the country.

10.2. HOW ROYALS FM IS TACKLING ISSUES RELATING TO GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

This section forms the second of the two-chapter series on the empirical results of the study. The focus of the chapter is to provide ample response to the second research question to be answered by the study: How is Royals FM tacking pertinent issues in local governance in the Wenchi Municipal District? The findings provided ample insight into how Royals FM has tackled some of the issues related to participation, accountability and responsiveness in Ghana's local government system as discussed under the Problem Statement of this study. The findings have revealed certain factors constraining the full potential of the station in its governance agenda. A summary of the findings on each of the three thematic areas have been presented in the foregoing.

10.2.1. PARTICIPATION

I discussed the possibility of Royals FM to organize programmes that mobilize the community members to influence the development planning and budgeting process at the Assembly as well as to promote civic education on the rights and responsibilities of the citizens and on the non-partisan nature of Ghana's local governance system. Three issues of relevance have been underlined.

Firstly, I have demonstrated that CR stations in Ghana, including Royals FM could become effective civic-fora for public participation in policy formulation at the DAs through strategic programming. Such programming can provide conduits for local people's inputs into the budgets and planning processes of the Assembly through For instance, on-air debates that highlight key developmental issues that need to be factored into the policies. Such an approach can significantly mitigate the effects of the central government controls and directives on the implementation of the MMDAs plans and budgets where, although as discussed earlier, the MMDAs are

given empowers to plan and budget for local development, the plans and budgets have to be approved by central.

Secondly, I have demonstrated through Royals FM that the ability of CR to influence local policies in the above ways is contingent on one condition, that is, adequate knowledge on the part of the CR workers in local governance issues and their capability in undertaking strategic programming that focus on the policies. However, at Royals FM, such conditions were deficient as the workers were largely less capable in comprehension of the development plans and budgets of the Assembly and lacking the expertise in radio programming on the policies. Therefore, the proposition in Chapter One that CR in Ghana, can address the problems of participation, has not been proved right due to the knowledge and skills gaps.

Thirdly, I recommend a two-pronged measure towards addressing the challenges in the role of Royals FM in facilitating the local people's participation in the policies of the Assembly and for state policy reforms on local governance. For the former, the suggestion that holds relevance for the whole CR sector in Ghana, involves knowledge promotion on local governance policies for the CR workers and capacity building for them on strategic programming on the policies. This can be undertaken jointly by the GCRN, the MLGRD, CSOs and the academia, among other stakeholders. In the former case, there is the need for a policy review on local governance to remove the central-level control of the development plans and budgets of the MMDAs to allow autonomy to plan and implement the policies for greater participation, accountability and responsiveness in Ghana's local governance system. This is the situation in better functioning local government systems in Latin America and Asia such as the Mexico's and the Philippine's context cited earlier in the study.

Thirdly, unlike the above situation, the findings have demonstrated that CR can drive programmes on civic education that can impact citizens' knowledge on their rights to demand accountability from duty-bearers and to participate in local elections. At Royals FM, a civic education drive undertaken by the station collaboratively with the NCCE has resulted in increasing demands for services and higher voter turn outs for the Assembly elections.

Fourthly, however, the civic education on Royals FM produced a lop-sided impact. In particular, there was a gap between citizens' knowledge in rights to demand services from the Assembly, as that was found to be high, as against higher civic apathy in honouring tax obligations and participation in communal development activities. Therefore, this study deems it an imperative for the stepping up the civic education on civic responsibilities to break down civic apathy particularly on tax paying to boost local revenue generation for development. As noted in a subsequent section, local revenue mobilization is a key determinant of local governance responsiveness in the rural parts of Ghana.

10.2.2. ACCOUNTABILITY

The findings here have focused on the role of Royals FM to bridge the communication gap between local communities and their Assembly members as well as making the Assembly members and the Assembly as a whole accountable to the people. Examining this role within the media watchdog functions, over here, I have identified three main issues that are of relevance.

Firstly, I have demonstrated that the proposition that CR can bridge the communication gap in Ghana's local government system and ensure accountability can be a reality. The evidence has been found through Royals FM's innovative programmes that featured the Assembly members regularly on air to give account of their stewardship and allow the public to express themselves on same. As well, the station's outreach programmes have amply shown the ability of the station to expose the Assembly's neglect of its responsibilities and to get action taken on them.

Secondly, the hypothetical proposition that CR in Ghana can address the accountability challenges relating to the MMDCEs in their appointed positions has been proven quite fallacious. No evidence has been found to show that Royals FM has in any significant measure been able to hold the MCEs of the Wenchi District accountable to the people unlike the Assembly members. Most of the MCEs have, at best shown little enthusiasm in availing themselves regularly on air or at worst, shown absolute disdain in that regard. However, a nation-wide study on the attitude of the MMDCEs towards the local media could be an interesting research area to serve as a basis for drawing a conclusion on the matter. Be that as it may, it appears that the NPP-led government's agenda to amend the Constitutional provision on the appointment of the MMDCEs to make the position and elective on political party basis by 2020, as discussed in Chapter Two, remains the onerous opportunity for downward accountability of the MMDCEs. And, as has been argued earlier in Chapter Eight, their elective position of the MMDCEs would enhance the accountability role of the media in Ghana's local governance.

Thirdly, I have found evidence of the potential of CR in Ghana to tackle the canker of corruption at the MMDAs, a situation discussed in Chapter Five to be a major obstacle to accountability in Ghana's local governance system. This has been exemplified in Royals FM's expose of corruption at the Wenchi Assembly involving the inflation of contracts on development projects that has come about through investigative journalism. However, the findings have exposed a number of systemic and cultural setbacks to these potential. They relate to:

i) Serious difficulties in accessing information from the Assembly to aid investigations of wrongdoing. This is a common problem faced by journalists and the public in Ghana, a situation underpinned by the lack of a functional Freedom of Information Law. This state of affairs, reiterates the crucial call for the speedy implementation of the Freedom of Information Law in 2019, as envisaged.

ii) Mixed public perceptions on the desirability of watchdog function of CR in exposing local corruption. Whilst a section of the study respondents at Royals FM have endorsed unequivocally the need for such activities as necessary to fight corruption, others have cautioned against the frequent exposure of wrongdoing at the Assembly on grounds of endangerments of socio-cultural Ghanaian values such as the respect of the privacy of people in authority and communal harmony that CR needs to nurture. My study calls for a further study to determine how wide-spread this social cultural perception is held in the communities of the CR stations in the country. Particularly, the survey needs to identify how things can be negotiated to enable CR stations to play their watchdog role for the better of their societies, within the socio-cultural dynamics of the country.

iii) Partisanship perceptions held against Royals FM, a situation found in anecdotal studies to have national proportions, where the alleged non-partisan posture of CR stations in Ghana had led to experiences of physical violence and intimidation of reporters. The situation proved to be a significant disincentive to the watchdog role of Royals FM. as it emerged that the corruption story reported in Chapter Eight, was a singular event in the work of the station rather than a regular feature. Even that reportage was coloured politically as some of the study respondents alleged it had been targeted at the NDC government during which time the exposure was done.

iv) It has been established beyond doubts that the political neutrality controversy surrounding CR in Ghana can be settled by the BL if specific policies on non-partisanship of community broadcasting are outlined in the Law.

10.2.3. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

I discussed collaborations between Royals FM and local organizations to promote accountability at the Wench Assembly in line with the social accountability approach. This is informed by literature in the Conceptual and empirical evidence cited in the chapter on the Empirical Underpinning of this study, which claims social accountability interventions can prove very effective in addressing concerns on local governance non-accountability. A key condition for successful social accountability, according to the literature is when both media and the CSOs have the expertise for effective collaborations. The findings here have highlighted a number of important issues to draw lessons from.

Firstly, I have provided deep insights into the problems of mainstreaming social accountability at Royals FM. Although numerous NGOs and CBOs are active in the Wenchi District, only two of them have been found to collaborate with Royals FM on local governance issues. The main reason for the state of affairs has been identified as a lack of adequate knowledge in social accountability practice among

the local CSOs and weak expertise on the part of Royals FM in facilitating CSOs activities in the station's activities. In their lack of the requisite aptitude in social accountability practice, the collaborative activities between Royals FM and two CSOs (*ResourceLink* and WYDA) have centered on what can be termed on corruption revelations at the Wenchi Assembly, a situation that some study respondents likened to political witch-hunting. The activities fell below the standard practice of social accountability that involves mobilizing the public to scrutinize local government policies for accountability and responsiveness.

Thirdly, I have shown that the collaborative partners in social accountability need to maintain public confidence as non-partisan entities in identity and in practice. Partisanship was associated with the activities because they were viewed as an extension of Royals FM's political agenda against the NDC pursued collaboratively with the two organizations.

Fourthly, in view of the above short-comings, I recommend capacity building for CR stations in Ghana in general social accountability. The training that will focus on techniques in CSOs facilitation and collaboration with the radio stations on local governance engagements can be initiated by the GCRN and the activities undertaken jointly with some of the big CSOs located in the urban areas with relevant skills as well as other stakeholders.

10.2.4. RESPONSIVENESS

The findings and discussions on this section focused on the concept of responsiveness as an indicator of good governance and how the media can promote governance responsiveness in accordance with its agenda-setting functions. This is informed by literature that claim the media can highlight the most pressing social problems and pressure government to respond. The findings point to the following issues.

Firstly, although there are legal provisions on the developmental mandate of the MMDAs, local people especially those in the villages, are still wallowing in want for basic services of quality sanitation, health, education, roads, among others. But I have equally demonstrated that Royals FM has, to a large extent, successfully set an agenda for the local people to pressure duty bearers for their developmental needs. Evidence of this abounds in station's outreach programmes that constrained authorities at the Wenchi Assembly to improve facilities in health, education and sanitation.

Secondly, I have revealed that the extent of the impact of the agenda-setting programmes of a CR station is determined largely by financial sustainability. With limited resources relative to the tasks of mounting programmes to pressure government for services for an entire community, a station will be forced to limit reportage to the immediate community to the neglect of the outlying, typically most deprived areas, as has been found at Royals FM. Financial sustainability of CR, the

study has established, is closely linked to ownership; a low sense of ownership complicates the precarious financial situation of a CR station since community support will not be forthcoming in support of the development agenda of the station. As virtually all the community stations in Ghana, are resource-trapped, the imperativeness of a legislative environment that prioritizes authentic CR that can draw on community support, as well as guarantee public funding for CR in the country, cannot be overemphasized.

Thirdly, I have established that the ability of the Local Authorities to respond effectively to a CR station's pressure for services is contingent on sufficient financial availability. Royals FM's study, shows the constraining realities of the precarious financial situation of the MMDAs in responding to development needs, a situation noted in Chapters One and Five to emanate from central government control of resources, perennial delays in the release of the DACF, and low revenue mobilization by the Assemblies. Particularly, the practice of central government directing MMDAs on funding of development projects only goes to satisfy government political agenda such as the implementation of electrification projects in villages rather the provision of the people's most felt needs, as was found in the two villages involved in the study. This situation goes to undermine the essence of local planning and budgeting. I, therefore, recommend a review of the local government regulations on central government capture of resources to give practical meaning to local planning and budgeting that would be more effectively responsive to local development. This reform, coupled with enhanced public education on local revenue mobilization suggested earlier, would better position the MMDAs to be more responsive to grassroots development not to talk about enhancing the effectiveness of CR's agenda-setting role.

10.3. METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

Besides the conclusions and recommendations emanating from the field data, the study makes a methodological contribution to the field of communication for governance and development at two levels. Linking the problems of weak participation, accountability and responsiveness in decentralization in many developing countries to ineffective communication, it has successfully been established that mainstreaming communication in local governance by the appropriate use of communication methodologies can bridge the gaps between theories and realities. From examples of innovative use of communication methodologies drawn from across Africa, Asia and Latin America, the study has provided a methodological framework for further studies that can focus on other forms of communication other than the mass media.

For Africa, such studies would be especially useful in up scaling scholarship in the application of the continent's rich indigenous communication systems in governance discourse. The present study has established that folk songs, drama, dance, poetry and story-telling that are familiar and closer to grassroots people in the continent. They are increasingly being preferred by development agents to the modern mass

media as they serve as conduits for passing development messages on health, education and agriculture to rural populations, are being experimented in governance and political contribution. An interesting dimension of the studies in this regard could involve an exploration of how the modern communication media particularly radio and audio visual can be integrated with the traditional communication means to maximize the communication impact. As indicated in the Chapter Three, such integration can make up for the inherent weaknesses in each of the types of communication for higher impact.

The second level of methodological contribution relates to the demonstrated ability to appropriate the normative governance functions of the media as watchdogs, civic-forum and agenda setters to build a framework for studying CR's contributions to the good governance dimensions of participation, accountability and responsiveness. This approach seems unprecedented and based on a dearth of literature, it can therefore be said to provide a guide for further studies of the field.

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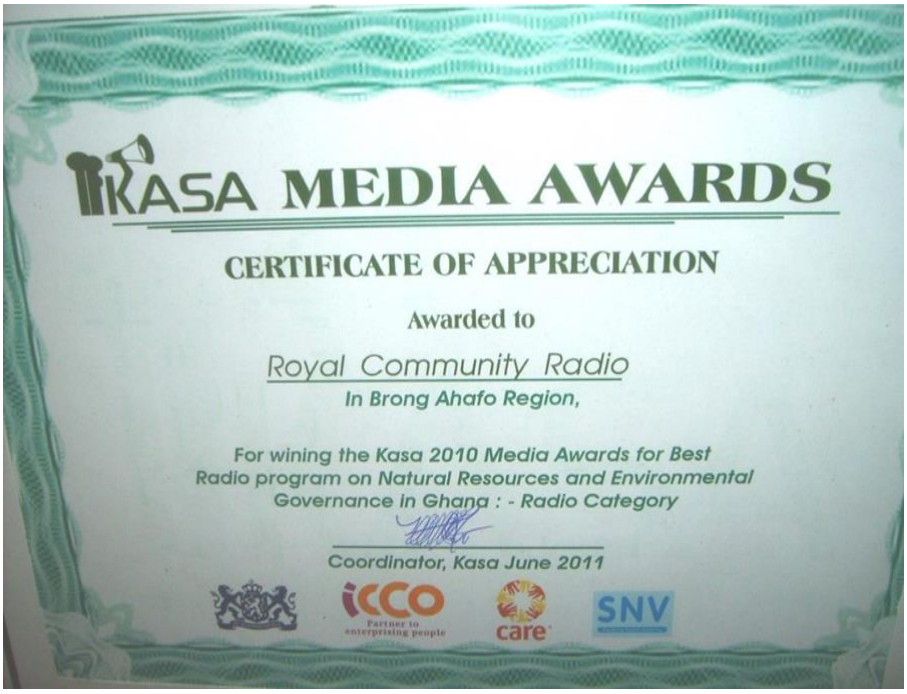
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Certificate of Appreciation for Winning the Kasa 2010 Media Awards for Best Radio Programme



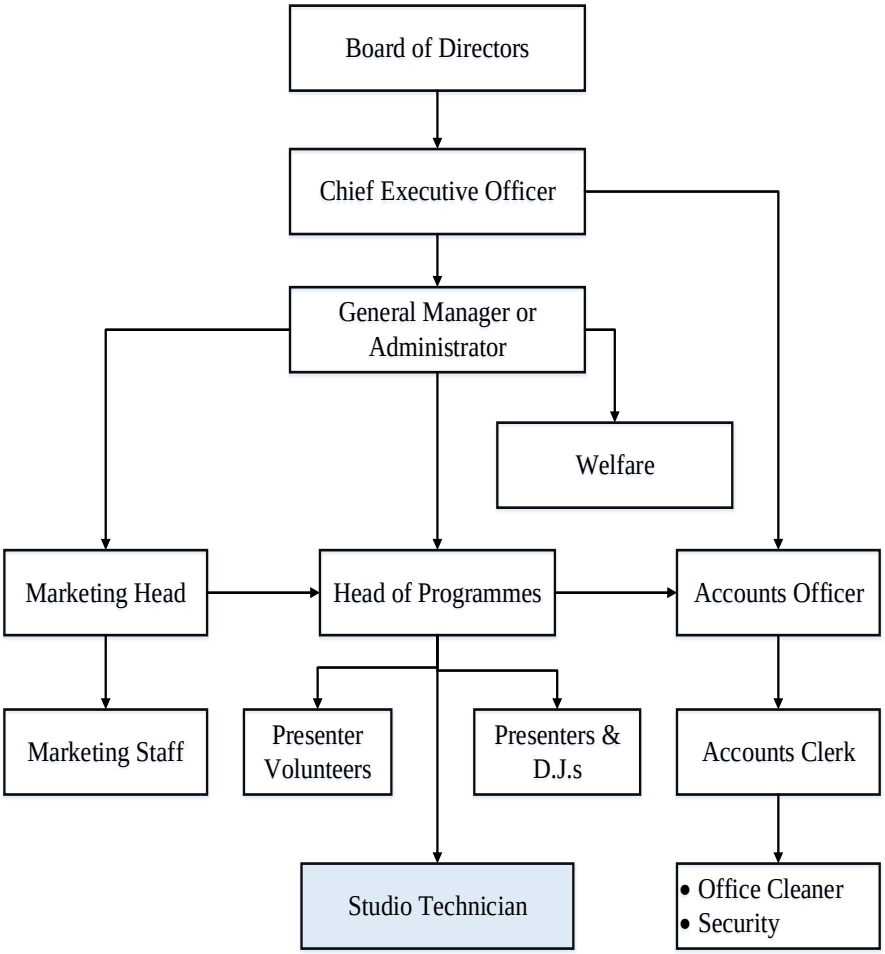
Appendix 2: Front view of building housing Royals FM

Source: Own Photo: Field work, 2017

Appendix 3: Studios of Royals FM

Source: Own photo, 2017

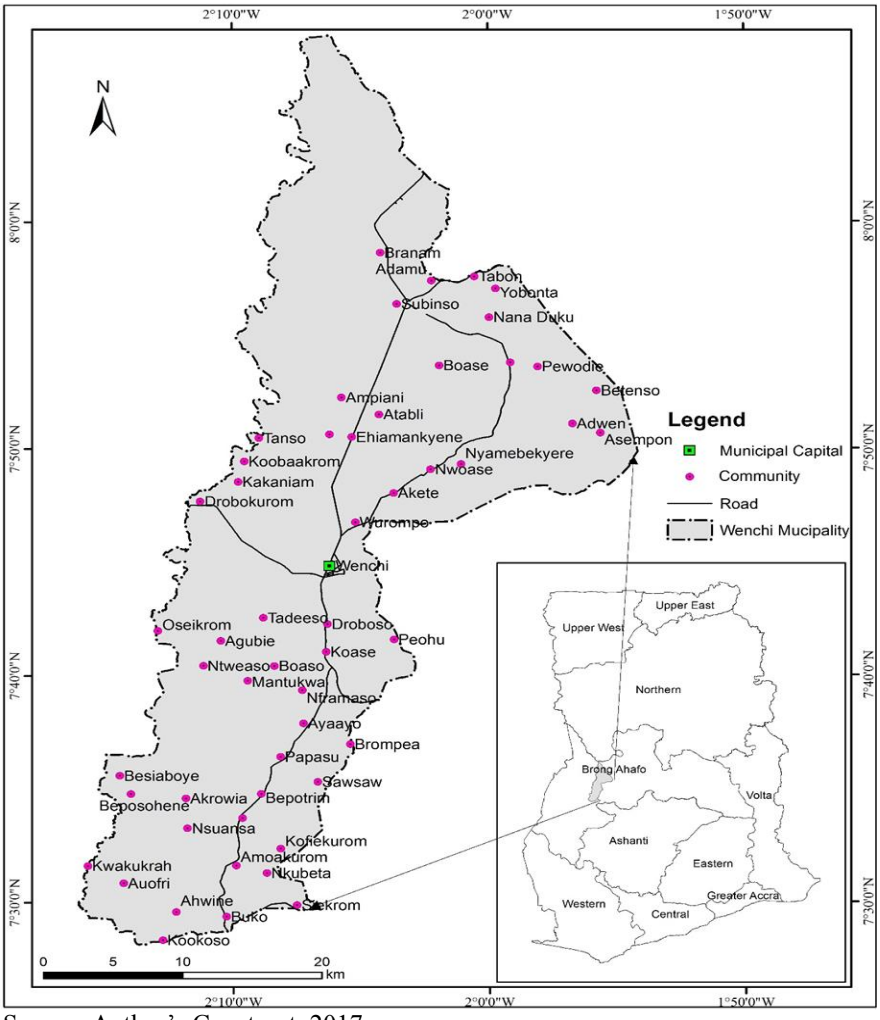
Appendix 4: Organizational Chart of Royals FM



Source: Files of Royals FM. Obtained, 2017

Appendix 5: Map of the Brong-Ahafo Region

Appendix 5: Map of Wenchi Municipal in the National Context



Source: Author's Construct, 2017

Appendix 6: Office of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly

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